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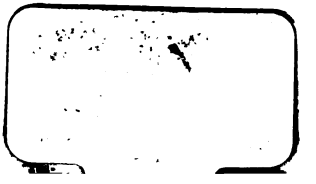
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THE SOUL AND MONEY.

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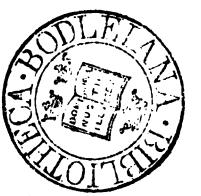
SOUL AND MONEY.

BY

JEREMIAS GOTTHELF.

TRANSLATED BY

GUARTERICK VERE.



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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

Of all the works of Gotthelf, "The Soul and Money" combines, perhaps in the highest degree, the essential qualities which have made his reputation as an author.

Nothing can be more touching or more dramatic than this representation of Bernese farm-house life, seen by the reader as it were in a mirror with a rustic frame, reflecting the human heart—the same in all times, under all skies, and under all conditions.

The plot is little or nothing; serving the author chiefly as material for a psychological study; but we find in these pages a depth of sentiment, a

delicacy of analysis, a closeness of observation, and a knowledge of the intimate wants of the human soul, which constitute it a work of genius, and, what is better still, a good and wholesome book.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Translator, who has been indebted to the late gifted and high-minded Count de Gasparin for prompting this undertaking, and to his wife* for encouraging it, in serving up this somewhat homely repast, ventures to hope that, though not intended for "bon-vivants," it may perhaps be enjoyed by them, as a change to a simple fare, as well as appreciated by a larger circle.

To all,

"Bonne Digestion!"

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* "En traduisant 'L'Ame et l'Argent' vous ferez un précieux don à l'Angleterre."—Comtesse de Gasparin.

THE SOUL AND MONEY.

PART I.

TRUE Happiness—that delicate flower round which a thousand venomous insects hover—one blast of noxious air may suffice to kill. Man, the gardener charged to cultivate it, has blessedness offered to him for his reward: but how few understand the task! While insects buzz around and attack the flower, how many look on indifferently, and amuse themselves with seeing it devoured!

Happy indeed are they whose eyes are opened in time; who, with a skilful hand, protect the flower and destroy the enemy: a work which tends alike to the peace of the heart and to the salvation of the soul;—two things which hold together, like body and spirit, like the terrestrial world and the world celestial.

The Canton of Berne is rich in flourishing farms and wealthy villages; the former tenanted

by many a worthy couple renowned for godliness and for wisdom in the bringing up of their children; villages, where lofts and granaries are heaped with goods little dreamed of by the outer world—that new-fangled world which turns everything into gold simply by selling and spending whatever comes into its possession.

All these accumulated stores represent sums such as many a gentleman would not have ready at hand, good times or bad. These riches have no *one* accustomed place: like familiar spirits (but good spirits) they roam throughout the house;—now in the barns, now in the lofts, now in the cellars, now in the apple-rooms, now in all four places at once, not counting half a dozen other receptacles. No sooner is the least bit of land for sale that would suit the farm, than it is bought off-hand,—bought and paid for; for here neither father nor mother has ever asked for credit from any one: whatever they have bought they have paid for with their own hands and with their own earnings. If, however, a good man, a friend or relative, should happen to be short of money with which to make an advantageous purchase, their funds would be always at his disposal; not as an investment, but as a timely assistance, and for a fixed time, without either formal receipt or talk of interest:—simply on the word of an honest man and under the eye of God. And all this would be done as though

they really believed in God and heaven like reasonable men.

There the husband goes to church or to the fair in a substantial suit of corduroy. The wife is always the first in the morning to be up and attending to something; and at night she is certain to be the last out of bed, engaged on some household duties. Not a dish at table that has not been cooked by her; not a pig-tub in the outhouse that has not been well stirred by her own hand.

To find a model of this old aristocratic thoroughness and honour, one has only to go to Liebwyl (not the Liebwyl near Könitz; that is a village I cannot answer for). There a superb farm-house, with glistening windows, basks in the sunshine; a farm-house washed regularly once a year with the fire-pump, so that it always look fresh and new, though it is in reality forty years old. A convenient and well-sculptured wooden gallery runs round under the eaves of the house, while a well-paved terrace of flagstones in front of the dwelling-rooms, and of flints in the stable-yard, lies below. Fine spreading fruit trees in abundance are among the farm-buildings, which are defended from the north winds by the rising ground; while from the windows the eye rests in the distance upon the Alps, lofty in the proud resistance they oppose to time and man.

In an evening on the wooden bench outside the door, a man, whose age would be guessed at about sixty, is generally to be seen seated smoking his pipe. From time to time a cleanly, brisk little figure, with a pleasant countenance, emerges from the door, with something to tell or to ask him. This is his wife. In the yard a fine strapping youth is watering the horses, while his elder brother carries fresh straw into the stable. Now and then a merry-eyed young girl emerges from the rose-bushes to ask her father what is to be done to stop the blight that has attacked them; or she drives the cats from among the lettuces, or begs her mother to lend her a helping hand in something she may be about. The servants and farm-labourers are slowly returning from the fields; the poultry is gradually moving towards the hen-house; and the pigeon is still making love to its mate.

Such is the scene that would have appeared almost every evening at Liebwyl farm-house five or six years ago; and if a neighbour, or some poor old woman carrying away something in her apron, had been interrogated as to the inhabitants, the answer would pretty certainly have been, that they were excellent people, and very rich.

On their wedding-day, thirty years ago, they were considered the handsomest couple that had been seen there for a long time. There were more than a hundred vehicles of all sorts in the

cortége, besides numbers of persons who arrived on horseback,—for this was still the fashion both for gentlemen and ladies. This wedding had been an affair of three days; and as there was no lack of good cheer, it had been talked of far and wide. The wedding-presents were innumerable, almost overwhelming: for two whole days the young couple had been occupied in receiving them, and at last were obliged to call in the aid of friends. Truly such a farm as this was not to be seen everywhere, and the wedding had been worthy of it.

But what the owners possessed they held not only for themselves; they knew that riches are only lent from above, and that they would hereafter have to give an account of every crown of theirs.

When they were asked to stand sponsors, they never refused. When wood was scarce, they never imagined the poor could do without it. Servants were treated by them as they are not often treated elsewhere: they were not expected to be breathlessly at work from morning till night; and the milk that came in from the dairy was not supposed to be too good for them.

In short these were excellent people; and there was a harmony between them not met with everywhere. From year's end to year's end nothing but pleasantness and kindness;—a harsh word had never been heard between them. If a well-

satisfied couple existed, it was this; indeed, a happier one was not to be found.

So said the world;—and the world seemed to be right. But it is no less true that even here every one had a burden to bear, and every one found the burden too heavy. Moreover, it is the property of such burdens to grow heavier and heavier the more we chafe under them, till they become so insupportable as to annihilate every other feeling, and destroy the very charm of life.

Still there had been much happiness in this farm-house,—although here, as everywhere, there was something. That something, however, was only occasional, and therefore was not suspected by the outer world.

It is curious how that so frequent source of divisions and discords in general—worldly goods—will end by sometimes separating even husband and wife. Only an instrument well tuned will yield harmony to an intelligent touch; let it be out of tune, and the most skilful hand can bring nothing but discord from it. One would think that when once a young couple have cast in their lot together, with their fortune, losses and gains, all in common, that alone ought to ensure them against all discord; but, to my mind, strife and peace depend little upon such circumstances as these: they spring from the heart.

I may be answered,—"Certainly, where the

heart has to keep things even. As, for instance, where all the fortune or all the savings have been the husband's; or, on the other hand, where all the money came with the wife, and the husband lives upon her: either case being a temptation. Or even if there is only a difference of disposition in money-matters;—say, a thrifty, managing husband, and an extravagant wife disposed to spend a fortune upon dress; or an open-handed husband and a tight-fisted wife, who would count the very grains of coffee. Such disparities as these are sure to produce quarrels."

True: but there is something sadder even than quarrels, and that is *estrangement;* permanent estrangement, resulting not only from pressing and importunate burdens, but also from discordant peculiarities, even supposing there should be perfect harmony on more important points.

Our worthy couple had both been well off; so that neither had any latent reproach to bring against the other on this score. The husband had inherited the farm from his father, encumbered with only very trifling debts; and the wife had brought him from five to six hundred pounds. They were both frugal, clever in turning things to account, took everything in good part, were not given to gadding about, were good hearted, obliging, and benevolent. Agreeably to the good old custom, they had but one purse: the wife had

her own key of the money-drawer; and as to keeping a regular account of receipts and payments, that was never thought of.

Christian liked his ease. Once at work he was without an equal for activity and intelligence; but it cost him a great effort to begin. He was always disposed to postpone things from day to day; and what it did not suit him to do to-day, he seldom felt inclined to do to-morrow. Whatever the weather might be, he would never begin any great operation except at the beginning of the week. When everyone else was tingling with impatience, he would answer with a superb *sang froid*, "If the weather holds up, I shall begin next Monday; but I couldn't think of it in the middle of a week. That was always my father's plan, and it would be hard to find a wiser man than he was: the world wants more such." Then, when Monday came, if the weather was not quite to his mind, he would wait quietly for another week. He had never seen good hay made in bad weather, he was fond of saying; and when once the rain was well over, he believed the weather would settle. He had no fancy for working his men to death, nor his cattle either, like some people, who grow no richer by it; for the horse-doctors soon swallow up all that is gained by the hurry.

He loved every one of his beasts; and when he was obliged to sell one of them, it was like tearing

out a bit of his heart; so that he did not make much out of his stables, for the most tempting offer was no temptation to him. But if ever a neighbour had an expedition to make, and sent to borrow a horse and man, Christian was never known to refuse. Yet he was not fond of lending money; this was decidedly one of his foibles. "Once lend money," he used to say, "and there is no end to the trouble of getting it back; and if ever it does come back, you seldom get your friend back with it."

Anna, his wife, was very different. When she was a young girl she would turn round three times while any one else would turn but once. She would set about her work with alacrity, and nothing would stick to her fingers. This briskness which characterised her as a girl had not deserted her as she advanced in life, so that she was always the first in everything. "Only think," she would say, "of the time one may save in the course of a year by doing things promptly; besides that, one may do with half the number of servants. Not that I would preach avarice, God forbid; but still, where there are children, one must always remember that the property will have to be divided between them; and if it has been hard work to make ends meet with the whole farm, how will the children manage when their time comes, with only the half or a quarter of it? Besides, there are

always the poor to help, and for them one can never save too much."

All this did not deter Anna from being generosity itself. She would have given her own clothes away if need be. As to food, she gave away as much as she pleased; and money slipped through her fingers pretty quickly, at least when there was any in her pocket.

At all hours of the day poor people were to be seen about the house, especially old women, with their bags and aprons well filled. Malicious people used to reproach her with wishing to get a name for liberality and for being better than other people; and they would accuse her of giving the most to those who carried the worst tales of their neighbours. But this was probably only jealousy, as they gave less, and less willingly, than Anna. On important points, then, Christian and his wife were agreed; both alike desired to spend their money with a view to one day giving an account for it to God. They desired to be kind and liberal, and yet to be just to their children. But they had each their own particular views in this. Christian was for keeping everything in stock; while Anna would have liked to see him sell more, so that they might have more cash in hand wherewith to help their poorer neighbours.

Such were their respective inclinations; and

yet the difference was really less irritating than one would have supposed.

Christian used certainly to think that his wife was too easy, and put too much faith in begging tales; in fact, that what went in relief to the poor would really mount up to no small sum. "But after all," he reasoned with himself, "everyone has faults; and it's better that my wife should be too kind than too much the reverse. Besides, she certainly is economical: she spends next to nothing upon her dress; and there are few such housekeepers. She works enough for two, without having a servant always after her; so that I really cannot complain; for I might have had a wife who would make away with much more, and not do half as much work."

Nevertheless Anna often felt on the rack when a cattle-dealer would offer her husband such a price for one of his cows as she would not have scrupled to accept for one almost past milking, and never one of his best: and yet he could not decide to sell it; but would refuse the offer, and keep the cow in the shed, taking up the room of a better. Sometimes too, Anna would be almost beside herself when she saw a cloudless blue sky and the cornfields still untouched, Christian meanwhile sitting quietly outside his house, waiting for Monday; or, at the most, twisting hay-bands; while most of his neighbours had got in their corn.

Then on Monday, when all the reapers had come, and whom Anna was obliged to feed, if the least cloud appeared in the sky, Christian would keep them idling from breakfast to dinner, while he discussed whether it would be well to begin or not; and then come in with them at twelve o'clock without a single blade having been cut.

Anna could hardly restrain herself on these occasions; she was ready to despair: it seemed as though a heavy stone lay upon her heart. After a time, however, she would reason that every one must have something to put up with; that if Christian did not vex her in these things, she would really have nothing to bear; and that after all it might be worse. She would try and be patient. How many poor wives had far heavier trials, some with husbands who eat up everything, and allowed them to touch nothing! How would she feel if Christian were the very first in his farming, and yet was unkind to her or the children; or grudged what she gave away, and only thought of making money? No, she would not change places with any one else. If Christian was not the first in the field, he was certainly not the first in the public-house. If he was sometimes the last to stack his hay, he was never the last to come home at night; and setting one thing against another, perhaps she might consider herself only

too well off: anyhow, she would not exchange Christian for any one in the whole world.

While the mind reasons and rights itself in this manner, it readily reconciles itself to its fate; nay, more, it retains lively feelings of gratitude to God: misfortune loses its sting, and the defects of others cease to be insupportable. Christian and Anna, then, were happy; and they were in a fair way to be happier still, because they weighed themselves and each other, and their relative value, in the scale of gratitude to God.

Now and then, however, it happened that they exchanged a sharp word or two; but it was so veiled that among the gossips it would hardly have been remarked. For instance, if Anna offered to serve a small dish of meat for Christian in the little room, he would reply, that he would have "no objection if there really was any left!" Anna knew perfectly what this meant; because she had been conscious of Christian noticing how much she had been giving away lately. And, on the other hand, when Christian had been hanging about with his reapers, without being able to decide as to the weather, Anna, exasperated beyond all patience, would exclaim in her turn,—"Here, since they have nothing to do, they may as well go and thin my cabbages." Christian winced under this, for he knew very well that there was plenty to do if only it might be begun; and that it must be

vexatious for his wife to see so many idle men doing nothing but eat for their wages.

Certainly these retorts were rare, still they did occur from time to time: they did not provoke a quarrel it is true, as is often the case even in higher life, where words will run high sometimes about the merest trifle. Here the one who received the thrust said nothing, whatever might be felt; and however deep the wound might be, it soon healed, from two causes which averted any more serious consequences.

Anna's mother lived with them. She was a woman of great good sense, and much attached to her son-in-law. She had previously lived with another, who had treated her infamously; fleecing her of everything,—to which she was allowed to make no resistance, nor even to say a word. Here, on the contrary, she was done full justice to, and allowed perfect independence. Christian valued her counsels as he would have valued his own mother's. She contributed moderately to the household expenses, and whenever there was any little delicacy at table, Christian insisted that she should be the first to enjoy it, whether she would or no; and if ever she was ill, he would of his own accord fetch the doctor, and impress upon him that he was not to consider expense in prescribing for her, as he did not know what would become of them if they should lose her. In

this way she felt that she really was not a burden to him, and that he did not grudge her long life should the good God will it so;—which is more than can be said in all such cases. When the good old mother perceived by Anna's looks that there had been a few words, or by her tears; when Anna would declare she had been very hardly used, in fact that she couldn't bear it any longer, and that she would rather die—when she perceived this, instead of pouring oil on the fire, she would say to her, "Poor child, you hardly know what sorrow is, and it is only because you have never had anything really to suffer, that you think so much of a harsh word; but, Anna, don't charge your conscience with such a sin. I am always fearful when I see young wives torment themselves about trifles in this way, lest God should visit them with real troubles, to teach them what tears were given us for, and when to shed them. If you had felt what I have, you would thank God for such little checks as these, and take them as a proof of his love. Think for a little of what I have gone through;" and then she would talk to Anna of her husband, and of her other son-in-law, and of the endurance she had had to exercise so as not to aggravate her misery. At first, it must be owned, this did not answer. "Ah, well, mother," Anna would say, "you and I are not one and the same person; and your

having had more to bear doesn't make my trial the less."

But still the mother's counsels did take effect. Anna's temper cooled, and her affection regained its ascendency; and when she was quite calm again, she would playfully accuse her mother of being quite as fond of Christian as though he were her own son, and even of loving him more than her, and finding everything he said and did perfect. "Indeed, mother," she would end, "if Christian took it into his head to bite my nose off, you wouldn't hesitate to hold the candle!" But the mother would answer her even here; and one day when Anna had darted a cruel word at her husband, which had sunk into his heart like a poisoned arrow, this good mother trotted after him, got him into a quiet corner, and there entreated him not to think anything of it. He knew very well that Anna had a quick temper, and that she could not control it, however much she tried; but she was not unkind at heart; and she was sure that if he wished to make it up Anna was still more willing. Christian was not one of those people who set themselves up at these times the more the other party bends to them, so that the task of mediator was no very hard one. "But I am really not angry, mother," he would answer; "only it does vex me to see that Anna thinks she knows so much better than me. One can't do

everything at once, and it isn't my way to set to work in a hurry, like a bull in a heap of dead beech leaves. I've never seen the good of it: but I know that all don't think alike, and that Anna means very well; so, as you see, I never answer her back again. We must bear with each other in this life; I suppose that's one of the chief things we live together for."

Thus the mother-in-law was the good genius: she filled up the gaps that were yawning unperceived between these two hearts; and though there were some that she did not see, and that she could not cure before sundown, still these were cured by another medium.

There is an old family custom in Switzerland, hallowed by centuries, which allays irritation in the heart forthwith, maintaining peace there; a custom blessed of God, and more likely than any other to keep a family together. The last to go to bed, whether husband or wife, recites aloud the Lord's Prayer; and it must be a very heavy sleeper that does not awake at the sound and join in with the whole heart. At the words—"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," it would seem as though the very finger of God opened the lips to confess and to seek reconciliation; then at the words—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," both hearts bow in contrition before God; yea,

and also before each other, each accusing itself, and asking forgiveness of the other, ending with assurances of confidence and love and hope of future peace, till sleep silences all. At break of day both rise with light hearts and with all the joy of a second honeymoon. At such times Christian could not let Anna be long out of his sight, while she was frequently looking out from the door to see how he was getting on.

Thus years passed, and at last the good old mother died. This was a sad blow to her children. Their good genius had forsaken them, and they all mourned long for her. Christian would often say there had never been such a mother-in-law; and a day seldom passed that he did not remark, "Mother used to say this or that."

Their other good genius, however, did not forsake them: it remained to cement their two hearts closer and closer, and to help them to support the sorrows of life;—for there are such in every career, just as there are storms in every summer, and the finer the summer the more fierce and numerous the storms.

God had given them children, who had been the very joy of their life; but his hand had been heavy upon them, and had taken from them one after another the fairest and the best beloved, till it seemed as though they were to be deprived of them all, and to be left alone in the world. They were a

long time recovering from all this, and it was long before they could sincerely say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord." The words often died upon their lips—for the heart spoke otherwise; but they sorrowed together, and at night, when they said the Lord's Prayer, their voices often broke down, choked with tears, and they sobbed long and silently before they could take up the strain.

Nevertheless, by dint of courage and persistence, they in time triumphed: they were able at last to speak of the children they had lost, to recall how good and delightful they had been, and how much loved: to quote many of their ways and sayings, and especially some which had seemed almost prophetic of an early end. Then, from speaking of the dead, they began to talk of the living; how like they were to those that were gone, indeed more and more so, so as really to quite fill up their vacant places: they talked of their dispositions, of their prospects, and now they could talk without tears.

Three children remained to them—two boys and a girl. The youngest son was the mother's favourite; the daughter the father's: the eldest was beloved by everyone. All the children took after their parents, imbibing their sentiments of independence and honour. They were not much addicted to books, except the Bible; and after all

that was the great thing, as their parents used to say, and it was from their Bibles that they had first learnt to read.

It must be owned that these parents in some respects were not geniuses. When Christian had to sign his name, he would make a convulsive leap at it, as though he were going to clear a ditch twelve feet wide; and when Anna could not make her accounts agree with the butter-woman's, she would invariably acquiesce all of a sudden whenever the latter took up her slate and pencil;—she knew very well why.

As to work, it was quite the other way: Anna was their example in this, and would often remind them that they could never learn too soon, and that it was much better to be at something useful than idling about; for in the end they would have to work for their bread. Christian, on the contrary, protested against this: his theory was, that all this haste would defeat its own end; that it only served to disgust the children, who would have no strength left for work when they came to the age for it; while if they were left alone, they would set to work of their own accord at the proper time, when they saw the sense of it for themselves. This difference of opinion gave them frequent opportunities for forgiveness and reconciliation: for instance, when Anna would set her children to work, Christian would often interfere with,—"Nay,

don't force them; if they could they would;" and when, as it happened, Christian might be delighting in the sight of their idleness, Anna would strike up in her turn—"Surely they might be making themselves a little useful." Every night, however, these little jars disappeared: their good genius, the nightly prayer, dispelled all this, and counteracted the bitterness that had threatened to arise in these hearts already beginning to grow old. In some degree, however, it did tell upon the children; for children are like a whited wall, on which if a hand rests, however clean, it will certainly leave a trace.

Felix, the eldest, who was equally affectionate to all, was of that quiet, peaceable nature that usually takes its own course. He spoke little, but felt much, and lived more within himself than without; which made him appear inactive and indifferent.

Annette was a lovable girl, capable of talking a whole day without doing a stroke of work; but when she once did set to it, not a servant in the house could do better;—unfortunately this was not of very common occurrence. The poor did not like her, considering her proud and too penetrating; and yet if ever anything had to be carried to one of them, or if any of them ever wanted a little bit of washing done, she was always ready and willing to help. The young men, too, con-

sidered her proud, because she was not so demonstrative as some; and vain, because everything that she wore became her; and because she always looked just as though she had that moment come out of a bandbox. Andrew was a fine fellow, brisk and buoyant, like his mother; and, like her, disposed to be a little impatient and petulant at times. This could not be wondered at; for while his father went once round the farm-yard he would have changed the pigeons, the rabbits, and the sheep from their quarters seven times. None of the family were talkative; far from it: but whenever anything was said it was to the point. And, moreover, any remark that might be made by one of them, was capable of being divided and subdivided like a ray of light. Now and then, but very seldom, Felix, the eldest, would hold forth; especially after he had enjoyed a good dinner and a glass of wine; then indeed he would come out with many a thing that no one would have given him credit for.

The more busy and stirring the life of a household, the more frequent will be the collisions. In spite of all family affection, there are countless stumbling-blocks; each one has his special pretensions, which come out apparently by chance, and to which the tacit indifference of others is always galling. Indeed, the more accidentally they arise, the more are they thought to claim

consideration; and the very taciturnity of this family aggravated the evil.

Felix, for instance, was of a delicate constitution, apparently consumptive; this made him exacting in the matter of rest and bodily comforts and doctors' visits: and as his looks did not always betray his indisposition, he was apt to fancy those around him indifferent when they were only unconscious.

Annette, it must be owned, was a little coquette. She was content to remain the flower of the fireside, but only till it suited her to become in her turn a farmer's wife, like her mother. She had all a country girl's love of holidays and merry-makings, and naturally did not like to go to these like a Cinderella; on the contrary, she held decidedly to making as fine an appearance as any one else.

Unfortunately, her brothers were not always disposed to accompany her, and she decidedly would not go alone. Then, too, her father was often disinclined to provide funds sufficient for all that she considered indispensable. For the most part her mother sided with him on these occasions. "In my time," she used to say, "I was not ugly, and certainly I was not neglected; but I never wore half the finery that you would have; indeed, I had never even heard of such things. I wonder what my mother would have thought, if I had asked for them!"

This would make Annette imagine sometimes that she was doomed to live only for her brothers, and was not considered as they were. "When work is the question," she would soliloquise, "I am thought of; but only then: as to having what I have a right to expect, that's quite another thing."

Andrew, who knew that, as the youngest son, the farm would come to him (as is customary in the Canton of Berne), would instinctively have worked it more profitably. He was apt to feel that he was at a disadvantage in this; that others spent willingly but worked reluctantly, quite regardless of his interests. He was not covetous, but anxious; and many people mistook this silent anxiousness of disposition for pride: others interpreted it as covetousness, because he so often stayed at home while the others would be gadding about. Neither of his parents thoroughly understood this reserved concentrated nature; and no wonder, for one studies the workings of one's own heart so little, that it is very easy to misunderstand another's. But their good grandmother had early initiated these children into the peace-making influence of the Lord's Prayer, which they never repeated thoughtlessly. The brothers, who slept in the same room, and generally prayed together, especially felt the effects of it, and the sun seldom went down upon their wrath. Poor Annette had

not this advantage, inasmuch as however this prayer might alter her sentiments towards her brothers, she had not the facilities for acting immediately. But their loving good-nature towards her generally made up for this disadvantage; for almost invariably when they had vexed her by refusing her anything, they would presently come and regret it to her, and be more careful for a time to avoid the offence. Christian also, in his fondness for his daughter, would often buy her presents far more costly than she could have desired, or than she had meant when she was refused.

Thus this household lived on in affluence and esteem, till an incident occurred of very little importance intrinsically, but which threatened completely to destroy its peace.

Christian had had to take in charge a certain portion of the village poor-rates, with the title of Curator of the Orphan Fund—entirely an honorary office. He knew nothing of law; and, being incapable of writing, he was obliged not only to have recourse to strangers, for which he paid out of his own purse, but also to follow their directions blindly, as a blind man follows his dog. He did not realize, however, as Anna did, that there was a danger in this; for men are generally more insensible than women to contingencies and risks. This concern, which came between Christian and

his work, and Christian and his children, irritated Anna extremely; not that she revenged herself upon her husband for it, as some women would have done—aggravating an anxiety borne quite gratuitously; but she had no confidence in the individual whom Christian employed, and often warned him thus: "I am much mistaken if he is acting honourably by you; he is far too smooth and flattering for my mind: besides, he is always out of pocket himself; and to such people it is a terrible temptation to have to do with other people's money." But how was Christian to do without him? Business advice must always be paid for, and well paid if it is worth anything; in many parishes it is not to be had for money. Anna really knew no one more suitable as adviser; and for fear this man's poverty should be a temptation to him to cheat them, she used frequently to give him some little thing, and always provided him a comfortable meal in the back room when he came—certainly a better one than he ever got at home. But there are people who expect more the more you give them, and who begin at last to imagine that it pleases you, and fancy that as you cannot do without them they may treat you just as they please. Once arrived at this point, they do not hesitate to play a double game by serving others for your pay; or, better still, for the pay of both.

More persons pursue this trade than we are apt to think.

As curator, Christian had in his hands other persons' money or bonds, or both. However much government official and parish officer may be agreed, unfortunately there is no guarantee that entire fortunes may not inexplicably disappear; in which case, what law can be brought to bear against a government *employé?* All falls on the shoulders of the poor municipals, or upon the parish agents, poorer still. Sooner or later the deeds must be endorsed,—and by whom? Little thieves are taken, but great ones have a knack of getting off.

Christian was far from suspecting treachery. It happened that several persons had wanted money, and had applied to Christian's counsellor in their difficulty. He had assured Christian that it was perfectly lawful to lend the money he had in his keeping, or to sell the bonds for the same purpose; in fact that he had the authority of the parish for the transaction; and if he had any misgiving a written certificate should be given him to this effect. This statement had completely re-assured Christian: as for Anna, she was not quite so easy about it. "There's something about this I don't quite like," she would say: "between two and three hundred pounds is no light matter. How I wish you had had some other opinion about it! One can never be too cautious."

In everything relating to business, Christian always said as little as possible, not wishing to betray his ignorance, though, strange to say, he had no desire that his children should become any wiser than himself in these things;—and yet he positively blushed for his own ignorance. He consoled himself with deciding that if the adviser in question was a rogue, why then there was not an honest man to be found; and he would have been no better off whoever he had consulted. The fact was, that though he was really not quite easy in his mind, he did not wish to have a second confidant, and therefore persuaded himself, that if the first had deceived him there was no such thing as good faith to be met with. Had he not had the fullest proofs of his honesty? In short, as Anna was not a woman to make much ado, the thing took its course, and no one doubted but what all was going right, simply because no one said to the contrary.

Many years later, however, the affair turned up again: strange rumours spread abroad that Christian had made a wrong use of his position as curator, and that he had made away with between two and three hundred pounds. Although Anna went out so little, this nevertheless came to her ears, as well as all that was to follow; and how, if Christian did not happen to have plenty of cash within call, he would smart for it. Anna was

very much agitated, although she had a sort of confidence that things would surely not take so bad a turn. She insisted that Christian should go instantly to his factotum, and definitely ask him whether the affair was so serious or no. Said factotum made great fun of Christian's anxiety; joked him as to his credulity in listening to all these old wives' fables; and added, that he only wished every other affair was in as good a way as this. He completely re-assured Christian, and guaranteed that it should not cost him a farthing; ending by telling him, if any more questions were asked, to send the babblers to him. No, he was not the man to fleece any one this way; he would never be at a loss to answer for himself: this he might have more than once had occasion to do if he had pleased. But, good heavens, what were they thinking of? Poor as he was, he had always had a good conscience; a great deal better than a great many rich men's. Christian might dismiss all care, and go home and sleep in peace—all was right; and, once for all, he was ready to answer for every farthing. So Christian went home consoled, and consoled Anna; so well, indeed, that for a long time everything remained at rest. But at last the affair broke out again; and so effectually, that the worthy couple were in the direst agitation. Anna now was convinced that the first thing was for Christian to go and state the case to an honest

man. This latter took a long time in informing himself about the affair, but asserted that he really could not clearly make it out, not having seen the deeds; and finally he asked Christian whether he had not had an authorisation from the parish for what he had done.

Christian replied that he had not; that he had been assured it was quite unnecessary, as the thing had been recorded in the parish books, where it would certainly be seen; so that what would have been the use of a second copy?

"Oh, if it is entered in the parish books, that is another thing; and you will certainly have nothing to answer for." In short, Christian went away once again reassured; for that the entry had been made he had not a doubt. But Anna was not so sure of this: he must immediately go and satisfy himself and her that it was there: whereupon Christian set off, grumbling, and brought back word that the secretary had said he had not time to look into it at the moment, as it was a much more troublesome matter than women would think; but he might be sure that whatever had been decided upon had been entered there: he was quite aware of what ought to be entered, and what ought not.

This *seemed* to be decisive. "Bah!" said Christian, "if only the parish books are all right, let people say what they please; no

one has any right to complain—not the devil himself!"

But one day one of those persons who delight in harassing others—unknown to the world around—came to inform Anna, in confidence, that the entry was really not in the parish register, but that it was a plot against Christian; that the secretary only wished to put him off, and keep him in the dark that it might hang on as long as possible; that Christian would have to pay up in the end—and that pretty freely; and that she had just come to warn her how it would end, that she might try if possible to save something.

This was indeed a thunder-stroke for poor Anna, the more so because she could devise no expedient but to send Christian to the parish authorities, whom he overwhelmed with nonsense verging on abuse. At last they calmly told him that all this was perfectly useless, and that the only course for him to take was to demand an extract from the parish register, and, if it was refused, to take legal proceedings: this would soon decide what was in the book, and what was not.

This was done; and Christian at last, after many efforts, ascertained that not a word as to the whole affair was to be found in the parish books. It had indeed been discussed, but no decision arrived at—save that the responsibility must rest entirely with the curator; and, finally,

Christian had to pay somewhere about two hundred pounds. There was no loophole for escape; and the man who had deceived him was the most successful in excusing himself and throwing all the blame upon others.

Need I say that this loss fell upon the family like a thunderbolt, destroying its peace; or rather, that like a cankerworm it consumed it little by little? Yet it was neither exactly one nor the other; for though the blow was palpable, the cankerworm was no less there, vital and venomous.

Two hundred pounds is nothing to a merchant, and it would not make a fatal break into our worthy couple's fortune either: it was but a passing embarrassment. All that was wanted was to bring out the cash they had laid by, to half empty their granaries, and the affair was concluded. But it is not the same with a farmer as with a merchant: if the latter is down to-day, he may be up to-morrow; he may lose a thousand pounds to-day and gain two thousand to-morrow: these alternations console him under loss. But a farmer's transactions are slow and steady: his small losses are counterbalanced by small gains; bad years by good years. At the best, with diligence and economy, and supposing he escapes great disasters, he progresses but slowly. But if great reverses occur, if his cattle should suffer, or the farm-buildings or the farm-house and its contents should

be burnt, he is thrown back for years. All this is borne with resignation, a resignation we may well wonder at and admire: it is felt to be the hand of God, and not only by himself, but by his neighbours and in his family.

But when, on the contrary, he loses a sum of money in some unusual manner, say by his own carelessness, or by the roguery of others, it is all over with him in this aspect of the case: his peace has been undermined, and he may not recover it to-morrow, nor perhaps as long as he lives; and what will his children and his children's children think?

Christian and Anna had certainly been laying by; but these savings had been regarded as inviolate. Christian, as we know, was not *au fait* in money matters, and took time about earning as he did about everything else,—as for Anna, we know that giving and spending was rather her forte; so that two hundred pounds must have seemed to them a sum which it would take a lifetime to make up. Besides, now that their children were grown up they must be told of this; and how would they take it?

In the country, where the children of a household take part with their parents in their daily avocations, they see results, and are aware of debts and remittances; so that they naturally have a voice in these matters sooner than would otherwise be the case.

These three children were now all marriageable; and might not this loss interfere with their marriage, especially by the talk there would be about it? Things are so apt to be exaggerated, that perhaps this would be said to be not all the loss. And in case of an engagement, where was the dowry to come from? It might be necessary to mortgage or to borrow, if the children were not to go empty-handed. Anna was on the rack day and night; and no wonder that they were both somewhat soured by the loss, for it had been really to them like the loss of a part of their very life.

We all feel life to be a precious gift with which we have much to gain; with this temporal life we have to win the life eternal; but how many think only of turning it to account for procuring riches, and estimate their lives by the size of the heap of wealth they have accumulated—as a mole might measure itself by its molehill! and when all this heap happens to be swept away, they can think of nothing else, for they have literally lost everything.

Christian and Anna were not of this class; and yet that did not prevent them from estimating people very much according to the dimensions of their fortune, and still more according to the amount they had been able to save. "Such a one," they would often say, "has come in for so much, and by the time he has to do with it, think

what it will have accumulated to; and think, too, what a fortune he will have to leave!" For all that they had not studied arithmetic very much at school, they were still not unused to this sort of reckoning; and though Christian did not actually give utterance to the reflection, he probably did not the less realize sometimes as he sat pondering in his accustomed chair at the village inn:—"Now, here in this chair sits over two hundred pounds, Bernese gold." And we are not going to reproach him with it; for there are numbers of persons who do just the same: but what will it profit them if they have bartered their own souls?

For some time it seemed literally as though husband and wife had been stunned: they could think of nothing but this two hundred pounds. The children felt it less than their parents; they had years to look forward to, in which they might reasonably hope to make it up. It was Annette who took it most to heart; thinking immediately of her dowry, or even fearing that certain aspirants might be frightened away. But the worst consequences that might have been dreaded did not happen here: the children did not reproach their parents, but sought about for every possible consolation for them. Parents, whose whole soul has been engrossed with money, are apt to learn on these occasions how the sword may be turned against its master: their children may become

irate, and may even go so far as to speculate as to how much longer their parents are likely to live.

Here, happily, there reigned the true old family affection and family esteem; and the children rejoiced to look forward to long life for the parents God had given them.

Christian and Anna were in very much the state of mind of a man whose house has been burnt to the ground: at first his utter loss overwhelms him; then a few gleams seem to pierce through the darkness, as he awakens to the necessity for setting to work afresh to repair his losses; and in so doing he begins to ponder the origin of them.

With Christian it was not a question of rebuilding a house, but of replacing two hundred pounds. Every time a poor beggar woman left the house, he would think, "Now there was a trifle that might have been turned into money; not one of them ever leaves the house without carrying something away. What is the use of my taking so much trouble to economise, when others squander everything that is not fastened to the house with nails?" Like some other good people, Christian fell into the error of supposing that what he had decided upon as necessary some one else ought to begin. He should have remembered, on the contrary, that when a farmer begins to mow with his men it is he that takes the lead.

Anna, on the other hand, though often recalling

how she had implored him not to let the money go, how she had urged him to be cautious, and how she had always disliked and suspected their plausible friend, now immediately set about considering how she could do her work with fewer hands to help her. When she thought of those over-fed cows in the cowhouse giving hardly any milk, she could not resist reckoning how many pounds might be made out of them. All this, however, merely passed through her mind: she never reproached her husband. They prayed together, and slept soundly, though not without heaving many a sigh.

But the devil is an enemy that prowls about, not always like a roaring lion. He sometimes takes the form of a fugitive thought, which first passes over the spirit like a subtle vapour, and at last settles down upon it and clouds it totally. It is then that this thought forms itself into words; and at the very time when we perhaps imagine we are giving utterance to truth and right itself, it is the devil that darts from our mouths, attacking our neighbour tooth and nail.

One unlucky day everything seemed to take the wrong turn: it is a well-known fact that there are such days. In the stable one of the horses was found to have trodden on its halter, and injured itself so much that it seemed hardly likely ever to be of any use again. There was something wrong

in the cow-house, too; and when some linseed meal was called for, it appeared that the mother had given the last handful away to a poor sick woman. A great deal of time was lost in going backwards and forwards; so that while others were getting on with their reaping, Christian's fields were standing at the mercy of the rain. That evening a dealer arrived from Berne, bent upon buying cows. He offered a fabulous price, for fat cattle were not to be had; but, whether or not, the citizens would have beef.

Christian thereupon smoked his tobacco. "No," he exclaimed at last, taking his pipe out of his mouth; "I've given you my answer. What a Bernese butcher like you are able to buy, I am able to keep." The man expostulated in vain as to other cows being equally good for him, and as to the profit Christian might make in this way. He might as well have talked to the wind. Anna, who kept passing in and out, listening intently, could not refrain from telling the butcher she thought he was quite right; and that if ever she had a bargain to make she hoped it might be with him.

However keenly Christian may have felt the remark, he said nothing, but simply rejoined to the butcher, "You have had your answer; if I were you I wouldn't lose any more time, especially if you wish to find what you want before the day is over."

The next moment an old woman arrived, whose son was very ill—a son who supported her, so that she was really very much to be pitied. He was getting better, and the doctor had prescribed wine for him; but where was it to be had? In such cases it was invariably Anna that was appealed to, and she was seldom appealed to in vain. The poor woman sobbed so much at first, with her apron up to her eyes, that it was some little time before she could begin to tell how kind and good a son he was, how badly off they were, how she had had nothing warm all day—not a bit nor a drop, and how she had had to set out to buy wine without a penny in her pocket. Oh! if Anna would have the charity to lend her just a trifle, she would be more grateful than she could express. She would work for her to repay the debt; and so on, till Anna had to stop her. But if her son should die, she would certainly never hold up her head again; for he was one in a thousand.

Anna was in a great difficulty. As it happened, there was that day not a drop of wine in the house; and as to money, she had scarcely a penny in her pocket. The fact was, she had just stood godmother; and the harvest-home, too, had exhausted her stock of butter, so that she had had none to sell: then again she had preserved the August eggs; and in this way nothing had been coming in: besides, the key was in Christian's pocket.

Still it was impossible to send the poor woman away empty handed; for if her son died, she, Anna, would never know a moment's peace again, especially at the last: and yet there was nothing she would not rather have done than ask Christian for the key. She first gave the poor creature some warm broth, and then went to look for Andrew, knowing that he had plenty of money at hand: but Andrew was gone for the horse-doctor, and had taken the key of his desk with him. Her elder son was in the stable, but his money was locked up with Andrew's. As to Annette, her desk key had been lost for several days. There seemed to be a fatality in all this. What was to be done? It ended in Anna's taking "her heart in her hands," as the saying is, and asking Christian for the key; and that quickly. Christian drew in his breath, fumbled reluctantly in his pocket, and exclaimed, as he gave it to her, "There!—but pray leave a little for to-morrow."

It was the first time he had ever spoken to her in this way; and for the first time darting at him such a look as words will not express, she returned to the house in silence, and gave the poor woman the half-crown with such a trembling hand, that the latter broke off in the midst of her exuberant thanks to exclaim, "Bless me, mistress, what's the matter?" "Oh, nothing to speak of," was Anna's reply; "I often have

this sort of thing—especially when I ought to have been bled. It 'll pass off in a few minutes."

Anna soon recovered her self-possession; for never had a stranger's ear heard her complain: never had a stranger's eyes seen tears in hers, except on the most natural occasion. What passed between herself and Christian should never be talked of out of doors.

But it had been a great effort; and she dismissed the poor woman more abruptly than usual, so impatient was she to be alone. The woman, however, was only the more profuse in her thanks, and out of curiosity to know whether anything really had happened, she lingered about the house for some time. But the door once closed upon her, she betook herself to Christian, hoping to get it out of him. He said not a word.

"Umph! it's very clear they've fallen out," was her soliloquy; and the thought of this made her quite forget the half-crown and her invalid son.

Anna, relieved of the poor woman, returned to her work, which lay in the direction of the pig-troughs; but not feeling herself sufficiently retired there, she passed into the garden, where the tall rows of beans had often served as a convenient screen. There she gave free course to her tears, and only wished she could pour out her heart as

easily, and so make an end of her sorrows. As she sat down on the ground, it seemed as though the very earth tottered under her; eyes and soul were shrouded in a dark funereal pall.

So this was what it had come to! She was to be the one to suffer by their loss: she was to withhold help from the poor (who had had no hand in it), to make up for the consequences of Christian's stupidity and the roguery of a neighbour! It seemed to her to be a frightful sin. Had they not often talked together against this very thing; against rich people economising in this unlawful way when they had been extravagant or improvident? And how much would be saved by it after all? A mere trifle: while in things which really would make a difference, nothing was being done. Pounds and pounds were being wasted; while for the sake of a mere half-crown, words were spoken to her that were enough to break her heart. It was very clear she was not loved: she was meant to be the scapegoat; and yet she had been the one to warn and to insist, and was not listened to, though now she was expected to bear the brunt of it all. Was it Christian's money only that had been lost? Had not her fortune been such that she might reasonably give away a trifle out of it? It would have been different if she had been a spendthrift, or an idler; but when there was no one in the whole parish who had brought her

husband such a dowry, and worked for him as she had done, it was as well to consider whether she had not some little right to a share of it when she pleased; especially when what she pleased was to help a few poor neighbours. Which was best, to spend this way, or to spend on dress and nonsense and going to fairs, &c.?

The more poor Anna reflected, the more her heart swelled, and it seemed ready to burst with indignation and sorrow. All sorts of violent ideas presented themselves to her: she would run away; she would have a formal separation; a divorce; but each of these schemes was dismissed in rapid succession. She shrank from some for fear of the world, and from others on account of the children; but just as fire dries up moisture, so her passion absorbed her grief and dried up her tears; and she no sooner perceived that some one from the house was looking for her, than her brow became as the sky after a storm, when it neither thunders nor rains, but the sunshine is lacking; an angry sky, which portends one knows not what. As soon as she perceived that the seeker had left, and that there was no one about the back of the house, she quitted her hiding-place and suddenly re-appeared at her post as an adroit woman always knows how to do, without its being discoverable whence she has come.

The children felt that there was something

wrong, but neither of them made any remark, and all went to bed as early as possible.

Christian smoked his pipe as usual outside the door: when once he had seated himself it took a good deal to make him rise; and though he might be longing to go to bed, he was capable of sitting till midnight before he could make the effort. This time he remained long seated on the bench outside, not only from habit, but because he had to face one whom he knew to have been irritated, whose mood might be either peace or war, and he had not courage to court the former.

At last he went to bed. As he had arrived last, he said the Lord's Prayer—but alone! Anna did not repeat it with him. When he had finished he paused for a moment: not a sound. He did not know whether she was awake or asleep; and he could not be the first to speak. Twenty times he was on the point of asking, but it never came to anything, and he went to bed in silence. This was the very first time they had not wished each other good night.

Anna was not asleep; but neither was she disposed to be the first to speak. It was Christian who had been the aggressor, and she would wait till he came forward. Whether or not she really wished he might do so or not, she did not actually inquire of herself; but she was resolved that when he did, she would tell him what she had been

made to feel, and warn him that if things were to go on this way——&c., &c.

When Christian was at the words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," she wondered whether he thought of the way he had treated her that day. When he had finished she waited for him to speak; but when at last nothing was said, "Ah!" she exclaimed to herself, now it's all over with us: he has ceased even to be sorry for having offended me; but he shall see that I am not to be treated this way."

It is a curious fact that Anna never once realized how she was dwelling only on the confession she awaited from Christian, and finally set down the withholding of that confession as a fresh crime, which she would never forgive him. Moreover, when there had not been the customary "good-night," it seemed to her as though a great gulf had suddenly yawned between them, too wide and too deep to be ever crossed. At times she longed to speak; it seemed to her so dreary to go to sleep with the heart full of anger and vengeance to the last: but all these impulses yielded to the determination that she would not be treated as though she had brought Christian nothing. All the night long there came neither sleep to her eyes nor repentance to her heart. At break of day she rose stealthily, and so avoided

either having to say "good morning" to Christian, or to respond to it from him. This, too, was the first time of such an occurrence.

It was a dreary day, for it passed without a word being exchanged between them. At night it was Christian who went first to bed. He yearned to hear the voice of his wife, which had been silent to him all the day through; for he really loved her, and had reflected that though she was a great deal too good to the poor, and too generous to them (which only attracted the worthless ones, as sugar attracts flies), still she was unquestionably frugal and industrious, and he might have had much worse faults in a wife. "After all, every one has faults, only some people have more, and some less;" and he had been on the point of saying so, for what good does sulking do? Besides after living together peaceably for thirty years, he did not see the use of setting out in another fashion.

Anna came to bed, and knelt down, but prayed in silence: Christian was beside himself. In his agony he had even forgotten that Anna had kept silence the night before; and he was absorbed only in thinking what she was going to do or to say.

"Ah! very well," he mentally exclaimed to himself at last; "very well, I can wait; if it amuses you, sulk as long as you please; it makes no

difference to me. If I were to ask you what's the matter, it would only be sure to occur again. What am I your husband for, if not to tell you what's right and what's not?"

Thus Christian exasperated himself, and for a long time, as men of his temperament always do. Anna had expected that he would certainly ask her the reason of her silence, and then she would have had it all out with him; but when he said nothing, asked nothing, she thought within herself, "So it has come to this; how little I ever thought you were a man like this, to care so little for me!" And it was all she could do to repress her sobs, her heart all of a sudden was so full. Pride prevailed, and sent all the hot turbid fumes from her heart straight to her head.

The exasperated couple rose next morning in the same spirit, kept the same silence, and a series of melancholy days ensued for the entire household.

Let spite, or any other passion, get possession of the heart, and it is like an element let loose, which devastates all within its reach; and when it can find no other aliment, it falls back upon and devours the very heart itself. When once a sullen reserve has arisen between the heads of a house, the whole household takes the tone of it, and becomes insupportable; feelings and interests are undermined by it, the thoughts can dwell upon

nothing else. One would say that the very eye-sight becomes enfeebled, so as not to see the most necessary things; for, as we have said, the devil is not always like a roaring lion; and hell is very much like a huge earthen stove, which at first gives out only a moderate heat.

So it was with this worthy couple. At first no one would have suspected what was going on; but now it was really of malice prepense that Christian did not sell his cows, and that he did not reduce his establishment, nor hasten the work. Anna, in her turn, became only the more generous to the poor, and within earshot of Christian used to give them leave to come again soon;—all this while both parties were still brooding over the two hundred pounds, which it was absolutely necessary to restore, and which was getting further than ever from being made up. The young people were the first to perceive the state of the case: their parents seemed no longer to take any interest in them; they might come and go just as they pleased, no more questions were asked them;—just what badly disposed children would have liked, but intolerable to these.

Formerly, when Annette came back from any pleasure-taking, her mother liked to ask her all about it, or rather to listen to all she related, without much need of questions. She would seize the occasion for giving her opinion as to this, that,

or the other young man, so as to suggest to her daughter which would be acceptable as a son-in-law, and which would not. Annette would occasionally turn her rivals to account during these *tête-à-têtes*, with, "Mother, I really must have a new dress: I meet girls whose parents really don't know how to make ends meet, and not one of them has such a shabby dress as mine. And these chains"—pointing to the silver links that fastened the black velvet collar to her bodice—"these are the very same that I had at my first communion: really they are so thin and old-fashioned, they are hardly fit for a respectable servant." All this was invariably met with objections and old reminiscences by Anna; but when she had once yielded, her husband never said "No" to his dear Annette.

Now, alas! it was all so different. When she came back from a visit, no one seemed to care to hear anything about it; or she was reminded that young girls used to stay at home to help their parents, instead of gadding about. If she ventured to ask for a hat or a new apron, her mother would look black, and remark that cares and expenses seemed all to come at once, and that she had thought Annette had more good sense. Then, if Annette shed tears at the refusal, and her father asked her what she was crying for, she would exclaim, that every one was against her, and that they all grudged her anything like pleasure:

that she could not bear this sort of life any longer, and that she was ready to marry the very first young man that asked her, only to get away from such a home.

"Ah! that's just it," her father would answer; "and expect a heavy dowry from me in the bargain; all the ill-luck must happen at once."

This sort of thing pained Annette; she was a good girl, and sincerely loved her parents; but she could not dismiss the idea that for the sake of others she was to be the chief sufferer, and to be quite overlooked. As every farmer's son hopes to be a farmer in time, so Annette considered she had every right to anticipate becoming a farmer's wife; not only for the sake of a husband (which she well knew was not a thing to be despised), but also on account of the increased independence and consideration earned by that position; for a wife —but especially a farmer's wife like those of the Canton of Berne—is a bright future in the aspect of rural life, a visible providence in the house; and because her father had lost two hundred pounds, was she to forfeit this coveted position? The very possibility alarmed her.

Felix, the eldest son, of a still more sensitive disposition, felt himself more and more neglected, and not without reason. Formerly, whenever his mother saw him looking ill, she would immediately prepare him some simple infusion, and insist on

his not going out into the fields all day; and at noon he was sure to find some nourishing dainty prepared for him by his mother, lest the coarser food of the hardy ones should disagree with him. If his illness did not pass off she would talk of sending to the doctor; or, still better, send for him, as messages never answer so well. But now his mother seldom asked what was the matter; and when his loss of appetite and his cough showed too plainly, she would say he would be all right by and by; that the more people nursed and coddled, the worse they grew. When Felix himself talked of going to bed and having the doctor, his father would interpose, telling him he could not be always having the doctor summoned, that he had something else to do with his money; and that the more he tried to save, the more others tried to spend.

Felix was deeply pained: he said to himself, that they had but to put up with it for a while, and that not likely to be long. At times he wished to die, to bring them to a sense of their duty; then he thought he would marry, that he might have some one always to take care of him: thereupon he betook himself to all sorts of places, spending his money at the village inns, and provoking the gossips, who expected each Sunday to hear his banns published: but it all came to nothing, and again he began to wish to die.

It was Andrew, however, who suffered most. Formerly his mother would often say, "Andrew, the sooner you bring me a daughter-in-law the better I shall be pleased; but in choosing her, pay attention to three things. First, that she is fond of soap and water and fresh air; second, that she sees to everything herself, and is not too fine to stir the pig-tubs; third, that she doesn't wait to be asked three times how she is, before she decides to say 'very well, thank you!' For my part I shall be glad to rest; and if you bring me a girl of this kind you may be assured she shall never have to complain of me."

"But, mother," Andrew would answer, "all in good time." This, however, did not make him the less ready to discuss all the young girls of his acquaintance, while Anna would pronounce her opinions of this one and that, and relate all she knew about their families as far back as their grandmothers: especially would she comment upon how their respective fortunes had been made; as she would not for the world that Andrew's wife should bring him ill-gotten gains, even were they cellars full of gold, and a pretty face into the bargain.

Now, though every young man's mother may not tell him so, it is no less true that he knows generally very little of a girl's family or of her faults; and as to her manners, he generally sees them through rose-coloured glasses. If she is

inanimate, or stupid, he fancies this will cease directly she is his wife. Fatal mistake! and happy he whose mother puts him also on his guard against that of imagining that happiness will be in proportion to wealth; or that he does not want good sense in a wife, having enough himself for two.

Andrew had in reality been on the look out for several years: he had already asked himself repeatedly which of all the girls he knew he liked best; reflecting that this one was the best looking, that the most lively, a third the most clever and industrious; but he had never yet met with any of whom he had said to himself, "I must have her, or no one; and if I may not have her I shall be tempted to hang myself."

One fine day Andrew took it into his head to go and take a bath. He placed a rose into the ribbon of his hat, put on his best cravat, and told the others not to wait supper for him, and not to forget to feed the horses if he did not come back in time, which he could not be at all sure about.

Directly after dinner he set out alone, for Felix happened to be out of humour, and Andrew did not care to take one of the men with him as body-guard—as the custom is in those parts, to sup with them, and as often as not to do the fighting for them afterwards.

The day was hot, and the road thick with dust; and when Andrew had had his bath he felt quite a different being—he seemed to have wings, and felt ready to fly over hill and dale. There were joyous sounds of music at the inn; and soon the less musical accompaniment of hob-nailed shoes resounding on the boards. Andrew flew upstairs, and into the room, where he saw half a dozen couples careering round and round, while ranged against the walls of the apartment were about a dozen girls, ready at any moment to join in the dance.

Andrew was not one of those sympathetic youths, who feel chivalrously disposed towards every neglected girl, especially as in this quarter of the globe the dance is not all. It has no sooner ended than supper is thought of, and, as likely as not, the partner is to be escorted home; so that, step by step, the whole future, ending in a vision of a gay wedding, sometimes presents itself to the imagination of a young girl waiting to be asked to dance at a village inn. These are the hopes that make the heart of a young peasant girl flutter when she is led out by the hand into the dance; while that hand is, so to speak, a key which may eventually unlock chests and chests of solid household treasures. On the other hand, if, after two or three dances, the young man takes leave of his partner without so much as a complimentary speech,

all these bright hopes instantly fade, and everything takes a cold grey tint within the young girl's heart; as though, while momentarily expecting sunrise, she had suddenly been plunged into midnight gloom.

Andrew, not attracted by any one present, called for a glass of wine, and established himself at a table, indifferent to the disappointed and even furious looks that were directed at him. "There," he exclaimed to himself, "if no one better-looking comes in I shall finish my glass and go home."

He had hardly made the resolution when, looking up, he perceived in the corridor a young girl of quite a different stamp. She was not half so smartly dressed as some of the others, but one could see at a glance that she was in every way their superior. She might have just been taking a bath of modest reserve, so redolent of simple dignity was her every look. The village youths fought shy of her; but Andrew, who thought himself some one, felt equal to the proudest; and though the young girl was a perfect stranger to him, he resolved to ask her hand. "It won't kill me if she refuses," he said to himself as he rose to ask her to dance.

"If you wish it," was her answer; and off they went, across the spacious room, like a king and queen in the midst of the common herd. The more they danced the more they felt inclined to

dance, and each alike came to the secret conclusion that they had never enjoyed a dance so much, nor had ever such a partner before.

At last Andrew suggested calling for a bottle of wine, which he proposed she should share with him. "As you please," she responded; but I am not thirsty." Yet she yielded at once, unlike many present, who, though the mention of wine would make their mouths water, would be vehement in refusing it.

It was easy to see that Andrew interested her, for sure of her incognito, she was less laconic than is usual with girls on these occasions. When the wine was brought, and the waiter asked Andrew whether he would wish anything with it, he replied, "Yes, if you have anything very good."

"As for me," the young girl interposed, "I accepted a glass of wine with pleasure; but I could not eat. My father will be here to fetch me directly, and we are a long way from home."

"What of that?" answered Andrew. "Waiter, fetch the supper. A franc or two won't ruin me; and if your father comes, there will be some one to eat what's coming: in the mean time let's have another dance. I don't know when I've had such a good partner."

"If you wish it," the girl replied again; and once more they went off with such spirit that the

news was soon carried down into the kitchen, and all the servants made for the door of the dancing-room to enjoy the scene. The supper had been served, and more than once the waiter had told Andrew this; but he seemed as though he could not give up his partner, lest, once relinquished, she should escape from him for ever. At last, however, he lead her to the table, in spite of her reluctance, she insisting that she should be allowed to pay her share. She had come to the village with her father, who had an errand there; and while he was engaged, she had just looked into the inn to pass the time. The idea of dancing had never occurred to her, and she supposed he had not come there on purpose either. She would not insist upon paying for the music, but the supper she really must: whether he cared about money or not, that was no reason why others should not.

Andrew wondered who this girl could be, and she was equally anxious to know who he was; but each preferred guessing to asking till more sure of each other: in this way both were disappointed. Andrew could not make out how or why this girl was so different from all the others. In speaking of her father, he had gathered that the latter had come to buy timber for building. He had thereupon asked whether their house was too small, which might have been a capital opportunity for

the young girl to mention how many acres of land were round it, and how much hay they were in the habit of selling annually to the cow-keepers. But of all this she said not a word. All that he learnt was, that the house was a very inconvenient one, and the stables very much out of repair. As for her, she gleaned nothing at all; though Andrew was generally rather given to talking of his father's horses, and the prices they might fetch. On this occasion it seemed to him as though anything like boasting would lower him in her eyes; and he remembered that those boast most who are most in need of boasting. Their chat was therefore decidedly laconic and circumspect. They were still talking when the young woman of the inn, the waiter, came to announce that the father had arrived, and said his daughter was wanted immediately.

"Tell him I'm coming," was her answer; whereupon she drank to Andrew's health (according to village etiquette), but began talking again as though she had really forgotten that her father was waiting.

But another message arrived from him pretty quickly, to the effect that if she did not come at once, he would go without her, as he could not keep his horses standing about all day.

"Let him go," Andrew gallantly suggested: "if you will allow me, I will see you home with pleasure."

"Oh! no, no, indeed, thank you!" exclaimed the young girl, blushing, and hurriedly shaking hands with him. Andrew grasped the proffered hand, and prepared to say something by way of farewell, which the young girl seemed to expect; but the words would not come.

"Quick, quick!" called the waiter; "he is going to drive off."

"Adieu!" finally ejaculated the young peasant girl, and hurried down stairs; but not too fast to inquire from the servant in passing whether she knew who that young man was. Andrew meanwhile abstractedly called after her to stop.

At the door she sprang quickly into the waggon, where abundant reproaches awaited her, to all of which she listened in absolute silence. She felt as though she were being driven back again to a dead sea, on which she was doomed to float long and hopelessly before being allowed to die.

Andrew remained standing outside, stupefied. As he looked long and wistfully after the waggon, he saw nothing but the cloud of dust behind it. Still he looked longingly in the hope that some gust of wind might come and disperse the cloud and give him one more glimpse of the young girl. Soon the vehicle disappeared in the distance, while Andrew still stood gazing after it, feeling his heart grow heavier and heavier, till at last it seemed as though a millstone were hung about it.

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"I would give twenty pounds," he said to himself, "to know who those people are;" and turning round, as he re-entered the house, he saw the waiting-maid behind him.

"Let me have my bill," he hurriedly said, feeling convicted, as though she had read the thoughts of his heart through his back.

"Your bill; oh, it comes to exactly two and a half francs."

Andrew threw the money on the table, and while the girl was counting it, he decided to hazard the question.

"I say, do you know who those people are?"

"Of course I do; it's the old Peasant of Dorngrüt, and his daughter: they live in one of the villages yonder. I don't know precisely in which parish; but he must be terribly rich. But stay; you're counting wrong: this is three francs, and I said only two and a half."

"Never mind; keep it yourself."

"Dear me, but this is something new! most people would rather pay too little than too much. I shall be very glad to take it, for I certainly want it more than you; so, thank you: but shall I tell you what I should like even better than the half-franc?"

"Well, tell me."

"Why, just one dance; for I see you dance terribly well."

"Come along, then," said Andrew, good-naturedly, "if that will please you."

"Now then, violins," shouted the girl; "but not too loud, for if the mistress were to know I was dancing, she would give it me prettily: she's in a terrible way to-day, and I should not like to encounter her."

So the dance re-commenced, the girl so radiant that she bounded like a kid; but she was not too wild to bethink herself of asking, during a brief pause in the dance, "By-the-by, who are you?"

Andrew's first impulse was to answer, "That if his first partner did not know who he was, his second certainly need not inquire;" but a moment's reflection checked him, and he replied suitably to the interrogation—for there was no knowing who might come to make the same inquiry.

"Oh! indeed," replied the girl. "I have often heard of Liebwyl, but I've never been there. The young girl that has just left was asking me who you were. Will you take a glass of wine?"

"No, I'm not thirsty."

"Very well then, another turn;" and the dancing re-commenced; indeed, there is no knowing when it would have ended—in spite of all Andrew's remonstrances—if the hostess had not suddenly appeared at the door in quest of the

servant, just then so absorbed in her own private affairs.

"So this is what you're after, you good-for-nothing creature," cried the hostess in a loud furious key, which completely drowned the noise of the violins and the scraping of heavy shoes along the boards, and which made the poor girl start as if stung by a wasp, and then after a rapid glance round the room dart out of the door, as though the wind had carried her away.

"So you are here still," the woman continued, directing her artillery towards Andrew; "one would have thought you had had enough. Another time, please to leave my servants at their work: if you want one to dance with, you must bring your own; or, if you wanted a partner, why didn't you ask me? You might at least have had the grace to ask whether I could spare time to take a turn. They say you dance extraordinarily well: come, let's see. Now then, violins."

At this point the poor bewildered Andrew found himself led off by the colossal hostess, fuming with rage and heat. He began to think he was under some spell, and was meditating a speedy escape; for if after the hostess the cook should lay claim to him, and after the cook the poultry woman, and after the poultry woman the woman from the baths, and then the nursery-maid, and finally all the daughters of the house, he would not have

done till next morning; and what would they think at home?

Just then, most luckily, the host himself suddenly made his appearance.

"Oh! so this is why every one is rushing upstairs to-day! but I'll have no more of such nonsense. Out with the violins: one would think a woman of your age ought to have a little more sense; a woman, too, with a third husband and fourteen children; but women's folly never dies till they do. Come, make haste; there are people down stairs just come, and calling for supper."

"Surely they can wait a little," retorted the wife; "we've waited long enough for them."

"I tell you to make haste down stairs; or——"

"You're a tyrant," screamed the lady; "but you shall see that I'm not going to be ruled by you. I shall dance when I please, and with whom I please, and as long as I please;" and so saying she turned round to lay hands upon Andrew again, but to her astonishment he had fled, and a loud laugh was the general rejoinder.

"Ha, ha! he's given you the slip," cried the host, greatly relieved; while his wife, almost incredulous, stared blankly round the room.

While the agitated couple interchanged civilities before resuming their interrupted work, he was emerging from the garden, which he had reached

through the window and over the gallery, and was preparing to make a rapid return home.

At times he felt as though he were going upon wheels; at other times as though he had sunk knee deep into the ground: then he fancied himself dancing again with the young peasant girl; and again, he believed he had seen her for the last time.

Presently he began to turn over various pretexts in his mind for going to see her, either on the plea of buying horses or cows, straw or hay, or else even venturing definitely as suitor. A young peasant of this class has all sorts of keys to a neighbouring farm if he wants to get access to it; but none of these schemes pleased Andrew. He thought and re-thought whether something better might not be devised; but nothing suggested itself.

They had all finished supper when Andrew reached home; but his mother had kept something warm for him. Her habit was to go and sit by him while he ate, and ask him where he had been; when, one thing leading to another, they very soon knew, both of them, all they wished. This time, however, she gave him his supper without asking any questions, and went about just as though he were not there. No approach to anything like a question, which depressed him sadly. Day after day he hovered about his mother, but he had no

sooner led the way to the subject, than some snappish word silenced him. At last he believed the right moment had arrived: he was alone with his mother in the granary, and was sifting grain for her for the pigs.

"Tell me, mother, do you know the Peasant of Dorngrüt?"

"Why?"

"Because I met him the other day."

"And how did you know that it was he?"

"Because I asked."

"And pray, why did you want to know?"

"Oh, I don't know: except that I had danced two or three times with his daughter."

"Ah, so that's it. While others are breaking their backs with working and saving, you are gadding about and merry-making."

"Nay, mother, surely you needn't complain of me; I do all I can."

"Ah! yes, very true, when it's a question of dancing and amusing yourself. One would have thought, as we are situated now, you might have let that alone. But that's the way with children; when we've most need of them, they think of nothing but themselves, and never trouble about their parents."

Andrew was past making any reply, his heart was so full. "Surely she must know how much I love her," he said to himself, "and how little I've

deserved such reproaches. If a young man mayn't go and take a bath on a summer's day, and dance a little after it, it seems strange; especially when one is always the first and the last at work—which would mount up if wages had to be reckoned." Besides, he had never once cost them a single farthing by anything like misconduct.

So thought Andrew; but without allowing himself to lose his temper. He felt bound to prove to his mother (possibly to some one else) that he was better than she thought. He could not be sure but what there would be inquiries about him; and then every one must be able to say, that a better and a steadier young man was not to be found. When he was tempted to feel vindictive, he seemed to see the figure of the young peasant-girl rising up before him with a mournful look, as though to say, "May God preserve me from such a husband!" So he controlled himself, and recovered his temper, behaving as he believed would be most approved by a young girl who desired a good husband.

But all his fine plans for going to Dorngrüt were in vain; no one seconded them; and he began utterly to lose heart, and indeed to decide that he never could bring a young girl into such an unhappy home as theirs.

PART II.

As future possessor of the farm, with a view to increasing his influence in the neighbourhood, and to please his mother, Andrew had aimed at taking a more active part in the affairs of the house. He had said, more than once, to his father, "Don't make yourself uneasy, father; we shall get out of our difficulty without your worrying yourself. Let me go to the fair with you: shall we take the white cow with us, or the red? they're both just fit for selling well, and I must learn this part of the business."

At first this pleased his father extremely: he was enchanted at his son's zeal and energy, and sometimes said to himself, "This lad will make a first-rate farmer one of these days.'

If the son's zeal had been seconded by the father's experience, not only would the two hundred pounds have been speedily made up, but, thanks to the impetus occasioned by the event, this same loss would have become a positive advantage. But, unfortunately, suspicion

and jealousy began to rankle in Christian's mind, and he took it into his head that Anna was prompting Andrew to make greater efforts than either his father or his grandfather had ever made before him.

He was not going to let himself be led this way: he did not choose that the world should point to his son as his superior, and remark that everything had gone on better since he had had his way. According to his notions, no good son ever supposes that he can guide the plough better than in the old track of his father and his father's father. He had never thought of taking the management of affairs during his father's lifetime; nor of striking out anything better after his death. But the world was getting worse and worse. Children now-a-days despised their parents; but, whether or no, he was not going to be set at naught by his: while he lived he would show that he was master.

It was all over with poor Andrew now: whatever he might remark or suggest, his father was sure to oppose; and if ever he could reproach him with a mistake or an oversight, he did it unmercifully, and even before the servants. He never ceased to remind him that he was only a boy, and knew nothing properly; and that he would have to eat a great many crusts of bread before he would grow into a farmer.

Andrew soon became quite dispirited under this state of things: he would have borne it all patiently, if only these reproaches had not been in the presence of others. But even this was changed, and this was what went so to his heart, and often brought the tears to his eyes. Formerly, no stranger, still less a servant, ever heard an angry word, especially between Christian and Anna —for what an example this would have been!—so that their house had been looked upon as the very abode of peace. But now they seemed to have no compunction on this point. Christian taunted his wife with her benevolence, quoting one after another of his neighbours' wives who were very different, and brought in ever so much per year with their butter and eggs, just because they had not incessantly two beggars waiting outside the door till three others should come out and let them pass! With wives of that kind, he remarked, it would be a real pleasure to economise, because money was not always slipping away as fast as it came in.

"Bah!" Anna would retort, "was it I who threw two hundred pounds out of the window? and couldn't I do a world of good to the poor without spending anything like even the interest of such a sum? Besides, isn't there all the difference in the world between poor people and vagrants, whom the Bible even never tells us to encourage? As for making money by selling the milk, I've hard

work to make it do for ourselves. I'm not free to buy or sell the cows. And as to the hay, if it was but made at the right time, we should have a better crop, and perhaps a second."

After such disputes Christian would not hesitate to say before the servants and the day-labourers, that this wrangling began to weary him, and that if it did not soon cease there must be a change somewhere.

Anna, too, would weep bitterly, even in the kitchen, exclaiming that it was well her mother was not here to see what was going on; and that if indeed she knew it now, it was enough to make her turn in her grave.

What had she done that she should be treated so? was it not really her own money that she gave away? Oh! that she might but die; and then Christian might try and get a wife who would make more money out of the butter and eggs. He would soon wish his Anna back, she believed; though he did find her so insupportable!

Words that fall into the ears of servants encounter a fertile soil, and spring up profusely; but while germinating they do not remain stationary like grains of corn, but fly about from house to house, and take root again and again in the ears of the inquisitive, which are open day and night, like the gates of our cities in the present day.

These ears of servants are strangely mysterious;

they hear at incredible distances, and through the closest doors and the thickest walls: and yet there are certain things which they do not hear; which you may repeat to-morrow, and to-morrow again, but which will not be heard, still less repeated! Have we not all sometimes found it so?

But it was not only the servants who talked; even Annette would now unburden herself to some friend, telling her she really could not bear it much longer; and that she would be thankful to marry the first person that asked her. "But not a word of this, on any account," she would add.

"As if I should!" replied her friend; "nothing in the world should force a word of it out of me!" Whereupon, the very first thing on returning home,—

"Mother," she would say, "things are in a strange state at the farm; Annette told me so herself. I wouldn't be one of them for all the gold in the world; and, indeed, if one of the sons wanted to have me, I would send him about his business pretty quickly" (which might be or it might not). And Felix, even in his unguarded moments, would involuntarily let slip some allusions; but when he thought himself neglected, his melancholy humour would come out still more frankly. In fact, the very beggars, though laden with Anna's gifts, would almost forget to thank

her in their haste to go and discuss what they had overheard.

We are all aware that there are found in desert islands occasionally, plants from distant zones, whose existence there would be inexplicable, were we not informed by naturalists of the wonderful way in which seeds and germs are carried through the air, sometimes on the wing or the claw of a bird. For it happens, from time to time, that in its flight over the boundless seas, a bird is arrested by a storm, and betakes itself to the first land it can find, when the germ settles in the soil and the barren isle speedily blossoms like the rose. It is the same with words: the wind carries them we know not whither; they settle in the human ear, and there take root and spread far and wide; and when we encounter them transformed into long histories, we are sometimes puzzled to explain the mystery.

The talk that prevailed about this unhappy family was just one of these instances. No one knew how or where it had first come out; but the excitement was great in proportion to the novelty of the subject, as a substantial diet is acceptable after Lent.

The subject was really an acquisition. "What a fuss to make about two hundred pounds!" was a very general remark; "and they who gave themselves out for being so much better than

other people! If I were as rich as they are, I shouldn't let it disturb me this way. But it's very clear how much they thought of money; and it was very easy to be generous, when it only cost them what they were really glad to get rid of—a little spare flour, or a few handfuls of dried apples. Such a fuss to make over two hundred pounds."

The women were especially eloquent on the subject. "Well now, it is indeed a pity that poor Christian should be so plagued; for he really is an excellent man, and always has something to say worth hearing. If only he had a reasonable wife! but that Anna, who thought herself the only good woman in the parish, and despised every one of us, and pampered the poor, so that if you gave them bread they would be ready to throw it after you directly your back was turned—all to make herself popular—she's been fancying herself too good for this world, and quite longed for in heaven by God and the holy angels; and now it appears what these people are really made of, who give themselves out for so much better than every one else. Yes, I've always expected something would happen to bring her down a peg or two: how could Heaven be just and not bring such people to their level? Now we shall see whether she'll be a little more familiar with her neighbours;

she thought herself so much better than us before, that we may well think ourselves better than her now!"

The men, on the other hand, pitied Anna. "One must be very blind," they said, "not to see who has always been the real head of affairs there, and doesn't know now how to manage. Nothing more fatal in a large farm than to be behindhand with the work; and it always is so there, and all through Christian. In the housekeeping, which is Anna's affair, everything is brisk and prompt; the servants are never kept waiting for their meals. Anna does wonders in turning things to account; while Christian will part with nothing, and is such an idiot at business, that a child could cheat him. It's not to be wondered at that Anna should give him her mind sometimes: it would be a happy thing for many of us if all wives were like her."

"What a race men are!" exclaimed one of the women thereupon. "One has only to go wrong, and the men are all on our side. It is quite a temptation to try how they would bear with it in their own wives; I fancy they would soon change their key! Everything pleases them but what they find at home, and they're never content with us, whatever we may do."

These rumours harassed Andrew more than enough. He could have borne everything else in

silence; but this overwhelmed him. It seemed to him inevitable that the peasant girl from Dorngrüt must hear it all, and keep aloof. He knew that a family reputation of a century's standing might easily be forfeited; and he was likely to be the chief sufferer: he to whom the farm would belong. What would have been the loss of two hundred pounds, or twice that sum to him, if they had not lost all peace with it? He knew the kind of girl she was by her face; and he grew more and more timorous as to presenting himself at Dorngrüt. His meeting with the peasant girl seemed to him like a bright dream of the past, which often made him weep. For a long time he said nothing, confident that his mother would ask what was troubling him, and then he would tell her all he felt: perhaps she would feel then how this discord was pressing upon her children: but Anna, absorbed in her own sorrows, did not remark those of another, and the propitious moment never arrived. At last Andrew opened his heart to his brother. He who had always looked upon Andrew as the favoured one, felt for him as he felt for himself, and the two brothers agreed that something must be done. Since their parents disagreed, it must be represented to them that this was doing no good, and only lowering them in the general esteem. If this were told them respectfully, they would certainly

not take offence, especially the one that was most in the wrong; and they would surely come round to a sense of their duty towards God and to their children.

Such was the conclusion the brothers came to; and the next thing was for Felix to listen to all Andrew's hopes and fears as to the young peasant girl; whereupon he declared he would go himself to Dorngrüt some fine day and see how things looked. This greatly cheered Andrew, and he began at last to be quite hopeful even about his parents, who he believed would not intentionally stand in the way of their children's happiness.

Nothing was said to Annette. Being the youngest she was still looked upon as a child, or as a resident stranger who has nothing to do with the affairs of the realm. Farmers' sons have been compared to cats—they attach themselves to places rather than to people; but farmers' daughters are said to be like pigeons—wandering about, and always ready to fly off with the first mate that offers.

Annette was greatly beloved by her brothers; but this did not prevent them from making fun of her caprices, and treating her rather condescendingly; and as she was quite alive to her own importance, she not unfrequently defied their pretensions, and brought complaints of them to their parents, which did not alarm them very much.

Felix and Andrew's good intentions towards their parents were unavailing: they were not understood, and were made to feel as though they had stepped out of their province; or, at any rate, as though they had probed a wound before it had come to a head. They were asked, what right children had to meddle with the disputes of their parents, or to question anything they chose to do or say; not perceiving that when mutual respect—that prop of a house—is wanting, it is sure to fall; and that once having allowed themselves to transgress in the sight of their children, their relative positions were quite altered; for when the children are the only reasonable persons in a house, it is only natural that they should interfere.

This, however, their parents did not perceive: they could not see that they themselves were changed; that they were in an unhealthy state, and could only recover through the healthy influence of their children. Anything that was said to them only irritated them the more, acting like oil poured upon the fire. When Andrew ventured to suggest that his mother's advice was sometimes well worth listening to, his father suspected him of being impatient to manage the farm himself; and vowed, that so long as he had a leg to stand on, he would never give it up.

Annette, the natural rival of Andrew, not having been initiated into her brother's motives, took her

father's part,—contradicting Andrew whenever he opened his lips, even before she knew what he was going to say; and when her mother wished to silence her, Christian became all the more violent against Andrew. Finally, when the brother and sister were left together, Andrew threatened that if she dared to speak again he would turn her out of the room. He would show her, he said, what meddlers deserved: and really she ought to blush up to the whites of her eyes for daring to say a word against their mother.

Annette dared him to carry out his threat, reminding him that he was not the master yet, and that as long as she lived in the house, she had as good a right to be heard as any one else. How dare he speak that way to her father, who had quite enough to bear with his wife's ill-temper? And from words it might actually have come to blows, if Felix had not come in and put a stop to it all.

Thus, what might have tended to peace, became a new element of discord; just as an engine intended to extinguish a fire, by taking fire itself, may carry destruction to another house. The quarrel which had been only between the parents had now extended to the children, and made the spirit of the house so utterly insupportable, that Anna fervently prayed that she might die if Christian's mood did not alter.

It was the Sunday before Pentecost, and at

breakfast Christian had a fancy for some of the cake that had been made the day before, a day on which, according to the usual custom, the whole household, including the servants, had been regaled thereon. Whether it was actually a device of the Evil One, or whether Christian had seen the last piece given away, it is impossible to say; certainly this was a day on which the poor people go about begging very early—sometimes knocking at the door at five o'clock in the morning. Anyhow, Christian asked for some cake with his coffee.

"There is none," answered Anna; "but I can fetch you some new bread."

"It seems strange," remarked Christian, "after all that was made yesterday. Annette, see if you can't find some."

"When I tell you that there is none, pray what's the use of sending Annette? Wherever it's gone there's certainly none in the house."

"So that's what we've come to! these women come begging the very cake out of our mouths; bread is not good enough for them any longer. When once they've eaten up the whole farm, we shall have to find our bread where we can. This is what it comes to when a woman is more obliging to beggars and vagabonds than to her own husband and children."

"Now, why should you ask for cake to-day, when I've so often offered it you, and you've

always said you didn't like stale cake? It would only have spoiled if I had not given it away. It really must be just for the sake of quarrelling."

"As you please; but it's very clear you want to get rid of me," growled Christian furiously.

"Oh, father, father!" exclaimed Andrew: "remember this is Sunday: what will people think if they hear there's been fresh wrangling?"

"And pray why should mother go and give away the cake?" interposed Annette; "she should have known father might ask for it."

"Meddling again?" shouted Andrew. "I suppose mother doesn't want a saucy girl like you to tell her her duty." Here Anna, who had left the room when Andrew remarked about Sunday, hearing the tumult increase, re-opened the door, saying:

"Andrew, you were reminding us it was Sunday; and aren't you afraid of people hearing you as they go to church? You, who reprove others, should know how to restrain yourself."

"Very well, father, don't be vexed," he added, as completely silenced by Anna's words as though he had received a blow on his head. "I won't dispute the point, and if you allow Annette to say all she pleases, I can't help it;" and so saying he passed out of the room.

All the morning the household was at sixes and sevens. At the beginning of the outburst, the

servants had all taken flight, and not one of them had ventured to return; so that the breakfast remained still on the table.

"What will people say?" these words of Andrew's haunted Anna. Yes, indeed, what would people say if on this Sunday, of all days in the year, none of the family were seen at church? Some one must go. But Anna did not know whom to send to represent the house. She must dress and go herself: a task she accomplished quickly and without help; for her mother had always taught her to be independent in such matters, asking what our hands were given us for, if not to use them.

Anna did not hurry to leave the house. She had no wish to join her neighbours on the way: she felt no leaning towards any one, and cared very little about anything but her own grief.

The church was about half a mile from the farm, and Anna encountered no one, all the villagers having gone early. She felt strange, being so completely alone, and a passing feeling came over her, as though she were condemned to go on, and on, always further and always alone. The bells were still ringing; but soon they ceased, and she heard only the sound of her own footsteps. There was not even the usual barking of a dog in the distance. The whole valley seemed as silent

as the tomb. What if she were really left alone in the world! Suppose all, both from the church and from the village, should have departed through that invisible door, of which our Lord himself keeps the key!

Soon, however, the bells began to give their final peal. Anna clasped her hands; her courage revived; and yet she trembled, for it seemed as though that solemn clamour might be the voice of the great Judge summoning her before his throne.

The church was full. Not seeing a vacant spot, Anna remained standing inside the door.

"Oh!" thought she, "if I were to die, and finding no place kept for me in heaven, I had to stand waiting outside because I had come too late; and at last be sent away!"

A horror seized her; for there are moments when the heart finds a message in everything that transpires around it, and when tears are every moment ready to spring to the eye.

Suddenly a poor woman, who had often held out her apron to be filled by Anna, beckoned to her from the congregation; but this she did not notice; indeed, it was not till some one near had given Anna a thrust, that she perceived the woman in the distance beckoning to her, and motioning her neighbours to make room for her on the bench. Yes, the poor woman taking pity on the rich one!

"Who knows," thought Anna, "but what, if I ever get to heaven, laden with sins to its very door, some poor woman may beckon to me there and share her place with me? Oh, how freely we shall be rewarded there for any little thing we have done for our poor neighbours in this present life."

When she had taken her seat she felt a sense of security, as though she were seated by her guardian angel; and a sort of foretaste of eternal peace and safety came over her.

When the singing ceased, the pastor began to pray, and the congregation rose. Anna was too content to wish to move; she was thinking what a joy it must be to enter heaven, and how awful to be turned away from the golden gates and sent into the midst of weeping and gnashing of teeth. At the very thought of this her heart shuddered as though a burning blast had swept across it. The days long past arose before her, and then the late unhappy period; the former radiant with joy and satisfaction, the latter clouded with grief and gloom; and again she seemed to realize what it must be to pass from the gates of heaven to hell. There was she, about to return presently from that church, where all was peace, to the discord and torments of her home—to a misery to which she could see no end. And she must return alone; not one of those around her would accompany her:

there would be no poor woman there to point her to a peaceful spot; she would be thrown into the midst of strife,—a strife not proceeding from bad harvests or ending with bad years, but arising from embittered spirits, and lasting as long as this bitterness lasts; sometimes as long as these embittered souls themselves last—that is, eternally.

Oh! if only she might never return; if her wearied heart might but be allowed to sleep and rest, till it should awake in the peaceful place prepared for it!

Such were the thoughts passing through her mind when she was roused by the voice of the pastor, who announced his text in these words:—

"I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

The speaker might have been addressing these comfortable words to her personally, as a sweet promise that she should soon have done with the sorrows of earth, and be made glad in the prepared place above.

She would have welcomed death; and yet something still pressed upon her heart. "I would fain be gone," she said to herself; "no one will miss me. Perhaps afterwards they will feel what they

have lost; they will think of me when the work is behindhand, or when something is wanting, and will wish the mother back again. But who will weep for me now if I am carried to my grave, and the earth is thrown upon my coffin? Will Christian bury his face in his hands? and what will Andrew say? Oh, if I had died three years ago, I know how it would have been then! It would have been to Christian like losing half his life, and he would have longed to follow. But now, if I go home to die, no one will sit by my bedside; and when they find me dead they will feel as though they were relieved of a load, and a stumbling-block removed from their path. Oh, if my mother knew how things were! If she had known how it would end! How little I should have thought it—I, who always thought there would be such sorrow at my grave, and for miles and miles around!"

Burning tears streamed down her cheeks. To die, and be but an obstacle removed, a weight lifted from the hearts of others! Oh, how terrible! and the very opposite was always what she had hoped and expected. The poor woman was overwhelmed with grief; it was as much as she could do to keep down her sobs. All her ideas were torn and distracted, and her heart was full of darkness; when suddenly the pastor's voice arrested her.

"Jesus had concluded his last repast with his disciples. In partaking of it, He knew that He

was bequeathing to them an eternal benediction, an imperishable inheritance. When are any of us taking our last meal with those belonging to us? We none of us know; not one of us knows his last day. It would be well if we all looked upon every meal as possibly the last; and indeed we might not be much mistaken, for how many a father of a family has been found a corpse the very night after having dined as usual with his wife and children! How many a mother has been suddenly smitten, even while the meal prepared by her hands has been on the fire untouched! How many young men and women have been carried home lifeless, after having supped heartily at their evening meal!

"It would be well, then, to imagine each meal to be our last, and to aim at leaving some good and loving word which would be recalled years afterwards, with the remark, 'How little we thought it was the last time we should ever eat together! what a comfort to think, that though he was called away so suddenly, he should have had such sweet thoughts at the last!'

"But when harsh words, or worse, are uttered at the table spread with God's bountiful undeserved gifts, and the summons comes while the soul is brimful of hatred and spite, what sort of memories are left behind, and how do we tremble for the future of such a soul! No time nor space for repentance. 'Oh, God!' we must inwardly

exclaim, 'he has gone from us in the moment of anger, and where is he?'

"In every household every meal should be looked upon as the last; as the Israelites regarded the one they partook of before leaving the bondage of Egypt to traverse the untrodden desert, just as the Christian traverses the unexplored Valley of Death. But the affairs of the day, and the distractions of our outer life, prevent this, and divert our minds from contemplating the facts of a higher life. Let us therefore the more urgently regard the Lord's Supper as an adieu to this life; not only as a farewell to sin, but to all those who belong to us, and with the idea that when we have partaken of it, we may soon be separated from them.

"And how have we acquitted ourselves towards them? What reputation, what recollections do we leave them? Do we take leave of them in peace? Do their tears follow us? Do their hearts yearn for us? These are the questions we ought to ask ourselves. Suppose to yourselves that this is the last time you will drink of the fruit of this vine; that to-night, when you lie down to sleep, the bell will toll your last hour, and then ask yourselves these questions: What have you been to your families? What will you leave them? In what state of heart does the separation find you? All this, I feel

very sure, must search like a flame into the hearts of some of you: it must awaken many a secret sorrow, and conscience must cast a black cloud over many a memory. I see it written on many of your faces.

"Oh! let us hasten to make peace, to repair wrongs, and to fulfil neglected obligations. If these walls do not overwhelm us, most of us will probably be alive to-night; but we know not how many or how few of us will be here three months hence to celebrate the Lord's Supper again. A great deal may happen in three months: do not let us forget how many deaths some three months of the past year have witnessed. Count the graves when you leave this church, and carry home this thought, that He who last year laid that number low in their graves, is still the same; and that it depends only upon his will, whether as many or ten times as many of us, are called hence this year. Why should it not be your turn? Which of you has a warrant of immunity? They whom we speak of were young, they were old, they were strong, they were weak; do you not feel a something within which warns you that your time is flying? Does not the very beating of your hearts remind you of it?

"Oh! do not delay: atone for past omissions; redeem the time; why do you hesitate to form this

holy resolution? Some will say that the fault is not on their side; another, that he cannot tell whether his overture would be well received; a third, that if peace is made to-day, it will be broken to-morrow; and a thousand other such excuses, all ready at any instant to envelop your good intentions like a pall. Was this the reasoning of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He prayed 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'? Did He even make exceptions when He suffered on the Cross? or when He commanded that his disciples should forgive seventy times seven, and that each should pluck the beam out of his own eye?

"Obey Him, then; be reconciled to your enemies, and you may then seek reconciliation with God. Forgive those who have offended you, that you may be able to pray for forgiveness. Do not procrastinate—for the day of our Lord may come as a thief in the night. Remember that your brother has doubtless somewhat against you; he reproaches you as much as you reproach him.

"Now these reckonings cannot be squared; it must be pardon and oblivion. Let him therefore that would approach this altar, if he knows that his brother hath aught against him, first go and be reconciled to him, and then return. In heaven reigns eternal peace: he who hopes for the humblest place there, must abjure quarrels on

earth, and dismiss vengeance from his heart. Repent then, that so, when the Saviour calls, you may joyfully bid adieu to your kindred, leaving them sweet and touching memories, and may enter into the haven of eternal peace."

Here the pastor ended: and his words resounded in Anna's heart as though they had been the very voice of God. All seemed to tally with her present circumstances and her secret thoughts; as though a glance of omniscience had read to the very depths of her soul. These words had shaken her soul to its very centre. Outwardly, she was stupefied; and when the pastor's voice ceased, she seemed to see herself on the brink of a yawning abyss, and to hear a voice calling to her, "Woman, escape, there is time yet!"

She did not approach the communion table, but mechanically left the church with part of the congregation. She would gladly have remained and partaken of the holy feast, but her desire for it was, so to speak, only corporeal, for her soul refused; feeling that there was something needed first, even the vesture of purification.

She returned home in a state of distraction like one who has had a narrow escape from Death, and remembers neither how it happened nor where he is. She was unconscious of the time she had taken in going and returning, and even of all that had so vividly passed in her own mind: but they

were waiting for her; and when Andrew, who was standing outside the door, asked her where she had been so long, it was evident from his voice that he had been uneasy. The dinner had long been ready: it was Annette who had cooked it; and her disturbed conscience had found a relief in the bustle and confusion she had created in the kitchen during the process. When her mother asked if dinner was ready, she replied respectfully, and said more than was absolutely necessary: she mentioned that her father had not yet come in, and that she believed he was in the wood. Christian had, in fact, gone and seated himself at the border of the wood, his soul clouded, while the sky was so clear and bright above him.

"It's a bad case," he said to himself: "I've lost all relish for my food; the children do nothing but contradict; the servants are beginning to be disrespectful. Everything's going wrong. I feel myself sinking; and at this rate I shall soon have to give up the farm that was my father's. Something must be done. The very best thing, I verily believe, would be to make it clear that I must and will be obeyed, and to make her suffer if she doesn't: but that is not easy when there are children; they would take themselves off, and things would be worse than before. If I were to drive away those wretched mendicants from the door with a horsewhip, I should certainly get rid

of them; but all I should gain besides would be to raise an outcry against me in the neighbourhood; for when a woman has a mania for giving, nothing on earth will cure her of it. The best thing would be to get a divorce; then each of us could spend our money as we please. Ah! but then I should have to give back the dowry, and I shouldn't like that. Besides, I should have nothing to bring against Anna, except her folly in this matter, and her being so wilful, and always reminding me of the two hundred pounds. I didn't act as curator for my own pleasure; it wasn't my fault; no one regrets it more than I do, because I feel the consequences. After all, I could console myself for losing twice that amount if we were but as we used to be. I would give up the farm to Andrew, and live in the back room: but it would be a disgrace to give in so soon, and with less fortune than what I first inherited. I should be laughed at, and that I should be sorry for, for Andrew's sake.

"If we couldn't get over it with the whole property, how on earth could the poor boy manage, with shares to make over to his brother and sister? Besides, who knows whether Anna would stay? A woman has often lost her head when she's lost the management of the house; and I don't know what would become of Anna if she could no longer give away. I don't think she would stay, and that would make it a serious

matter; for after all she has been a good wife. There are wives that are really despicable. As long as I live I must see that she is provided for; but who knows which of us may be taken first? As for Andrew, he's all right now, it's true; yet who knows what sort of person his wife may be? I've known the best of men utterly ruined by their wives. What is to be done? It's very clear things can't go on this way much longer:"—and hereupon Christian fell into a sort of drowsy muse, from which he was finally roused by the pealing of the church bells at the end of service.

"I must go in if I want any dinner," he said to himself; "but I don't know how it is, whenever I go home now it seems as though there were some one standing there to drive me away with a cudgel, or as though something fearful were going to happen. It used not to be so; on the contrary, I used to be like a ship driven into port with full sail. I never used to go crawling in as I do now; I used oftener to run than to walk when I caught sight of the house. Ah, those were happy days!"

And Christian lapsed again into a reverie; till at last, with a sigh, he asked himself, "Will it ever be so again? Oh! what can be done?" He did not in the least know. He walked on, feeling more and more sad, then vexed, and then melancholy, according to the tint of each cloud

that passed across his spirit. But none of those changing hues told upon his countenance, which was one of the wooden type, and never altered under any circumstances whatever. He entered the house with the same expression (or lack of expression), and took his place at the head of the table. Every one that day ate quickly and silently, like a group of automata. Every one was fully prepared for an outburst of wrath from Christian if a beggar should happen to appear. There was an instinct that something was passing beneath that immovable countenance, but they little suspected that that something was much nearer to tears than to rage. All dispersed as soon as possible. Anna had only swallowed a few mouthfuls when she returned to the kitchen. This, of itself, affected Christian, who never supposed that Anna's bustle was, not to get out of his way, but to escape before she burst into tears. He concluded that she was still more vexed, and the saddest thought was, that she absolutely brooded over all the old grievances, and was further than ever from making it up, now that he would have been so willing to do so. Formerly it was not so—this bringing up again was like the proverbial "serving up of cold cabbage" by stingy housewives. It was not a diet Christian could digest.

He left the table, and went and stood outside. He would rather have remained at home, only that

he dreaded a fresh quarrel, and would not risk being alone with Anna. At last, however, he set out, and had already gone a good way, before he reflected what he was going to do with himself all the afternoon. Anna had watched him from the window of the kitchen, and had wondered whether he would go or stay. "If he had stayed," she said to herself at last, "I would certainly have gone and poured out my whole heart to him; not only for my own sake, but for other people's, especially for the sake of the children." When he was fairly gone, and had never even perceived that she was watching for him, her tears began to flow like the streams of a mountain over which a rain-cloud has suddenly burst, and she rushed to her own room.

In a farm-house where there are no young children, a Sunday afternoon is still and silent enough if the weather is fine. You may go round the house twice without encountering any living thing, unless a pig should happen to grunt as you pass his sty, or a horse neigh from the open stable. Sometimes if you go round a third time you may see a Hans or a Peter profoundly sleeping under some shady tree, with his face in his arms, and his heels in the air. Sometimes there will not be even this much life visible, and you may knock three or four times at the door, and after waiting patiently, think

yourself very fortunate if after the seventh or eighth knock you hear a surly voice asking, "Who's there?" It will be the voice of the farmer's wife, who, to escape from the flies, and to read her Bible, has betaken herself to the back room, where, leaning against the thick curtain at the head of the bed, she has been lulled by the unwonted stillness into a sound slumber, till aroused by the visitor's arrival.

When he has departed she will get a last look at him in the distance, and will then go to the well to take a draught of the cool water to awake herself the more effectually. After this she will go the round of the house and the farm-yard, till she thinks it is time to get the supper ready; unless, indeed, she should have a fancy for indulging in a cup of coffee first to pass the time.

This Sunday afternoon a visitor would in effect have found precisely the state of things just described at this farm-house. All had gone out but Anna, who was keeping guard. As soon as she had shut the door upon the last of the servants, she retired again to her own room at the back of the house, and rested her head upon the pillow; not to sleep, but because it was so distracted and weary. It seemed to her that she must surely die soon; and she would not wish to be called away while in strife.

She could not hope to enter heaven if she had not been reconciled to those on earth. But how was she to set about a reconciliation? Christian seemed to get more and more dogged and perverse every day, and paid not the least attention to anything she said.

These were her reflections, and her tears were flowing apace, when she heard a knock at the house door. She did not hurry down, for the mistress of a house does not like to appear with red and swollen eyes, and she would not have been sorry if the visitor, whoever he might be, had passed on. Nevertheless, as he knocked again, Anna was too honourable to pretend that there was no one in the house (as is sometimes done), lest it might be that she was sent for to some one in distress. "I must go and see," she decided; "it would never do to commit such a sin as this so near my end." So smoothing her hair, and putting on her cap again, she bathed her eyes, and hurried down. It was a gendarme, who wanted a signature. If the truth was known, the good man was quite prepared for the customary glass of wine and slice of bread —for this class of persons generally resemble the lower order of old women, who go about from house to house in quest of news; with this exception, that the men usually accept a glass of wine, while the old women take a cup of coffee.

Anna was generally hospitable enough, and

moderately disposed to chat; but this time she was not at all in the mood, and only half opened the upper part of the door. Remarking that Christian was not at home, and that the man must call again, she answered the customary questions as briefly as possible—"Where was he gone? Would he soon be back? If I thought he'd be in soon, I would wait." And when, by way of diversion, the gendarme began to talk of the fine weather, observing that he hoped it would last, Anna replied, "Yes; but it's best to make the most of it while it lasts."

"You're right," answered the gendarme, "when one can."

"I think we generally could if we would," was her rejoinder, gradually closing the half-opened door, a clear indication to the visitor that he might go.

"Oh! if this is it," he remarked to himself, "I'll go to some other house;" whereupon, before saying adieu, he paused to decide which house he had better select. He was no sooner ensconced, with the wished-for glass of wine before him, then he began to discuss the household at Liebwyl, exclaiming, that if things were going on right there he must disbelieve his senses. "The woman came to the door with her eyes red with weeping; and when I asked where her husband was, she seemed at a loss what to say. She

neither knew where he was, nor when he would return; as if a good woman oughtn't always to know where her husband is."

Anna, when she had closed the door and re-adjusted the bed in the back room, passed out by the door at the side, shutting it after her. She went round the house and the outhouses, which she had not inspected for a long time. She even paid a visit to the pigs, who saluted her with the most amicable grunts, and whom she rewarded with an armful of fresh straw. She then passed into the orchard, going from tree to tree, observing which apples would be likely to sell well, and which would be best for keeping, either for drying in quarters or for making cider or brandy. Soon she found herself amongst the flax, tall and healthy, and vieing with the hemp in its abundant growth. The more Anna went about, the more she admired the healthy look of everything; and when she stood on the rising ground at the back of the house her heart quite bounded at the scene; for "certainly," she said to herself, "there's not a more flourishing farm to be seen in the Canton." But the sense of desolation returned; just as during the rainy season the torrents come down the more intensely after a gleam of sunshine.

"All this is our own," she exclaimed; "and how happy we ought to be! Yet, what a life we are leading; there's not a rag-merchant more to be

pitied than we are! Not that we're poor; we have certainly as much as we are likely to want, and our children too; but it's internally that we're not well off."

Anna gazed beyond their own dwelling into the distance; she saw the sky circling round her, and blending with the outline of the landscape; and she seemed to realize in this the blessed results of this union of earth and heaven. A deep feeling came over her, that this was the secret of all the fertility she saw around her. "Thus," she thought to herself, "each event in our lives ought to stand like a mountain whose summit heaven rests upon. Yes, each of our days should reach to heaven, and should never end with any other sleep than that of the wearied pilgrim, who, slumbering in the bosom of his Lord and Master, saw in his dreams the ladder resting on earth and reaching to heaven, and ascended and descended by God's holy angels. How well such sleep would fit us for resuming our pilgrim's march!

"And wasn't it so once with us?" she continued. "When the night came, inviting us to repose, didn't we lift up our hearts to God, leaving behind us all the miseries of earth, and plunging all our evil thoughts and resentments into the sea of oblivion? Now, however, we don't throw off anything: we go to bed with our hearts laden with sorrow, passion, and gloom; and no doubt the

spirits of evil foster these within us in the hours of darkness. In the morning no bright sunshine penetrates our hearts; the same stock of wretchedness is there ready to accumulate and to obscure all brightness; just as on some stormy days not a clear corner of sky can be distinguished anywhere."

For the first time Anna now perceived the sin she had fallen into in ceasing to pray; for she saw that she could distinctly date all their misery from that night.

No doubt she had prayed to herself; but this prayer had not reached Christian: it had not overthrown stumbling-stones; it had risen less and less steadily to heaven; it had become more and more mechanical. No light coming down from above, things around had become more and more obscure and confused.

All through her fault! She ceased to attribute their trials to the loss of the two hundred pounds, which, after all, pressed less upon her than it did upon her husband. She traced everything now to the rupture of that spiritual tie which had united them for so many years in the closest affection; and this rupture she had caused! This conviction penetrated Anna's soul like a flash of lightning, and agitated her greatly. Clear as it was now, she had never seen or suspected it before. She might have been called

to die with this sin upon her conscience, and the sighs of her children, whose existence and whose very dispositions she had been poisoning! Now she realized how keenly we perceive the mote in our neighbour's eye without attending to the beam in our own. What if God had judged her as she had been judging her husband!

A profound humility took possession of her: she felt that no punishment would be too severe for her; and, far from wishing to escape it, she would have hailed any chastisement, if only she might hope that afterwards God would make his face to shine upon her. She remembered, too, that if we desire forgiveness we must seek to repair the wrongs we have committed, and recognise their extreme sinfulness, even though others should make light of them. In short, she had awaked completely to the conviction that the happiness and peace of the whole family depended upon her, and that she could propose to herself no nobler task than to cement the ties that had been broken.

Ah! that the world would practically recognise that true heroism does not consist in accomplishing lofty deeds which all tongues hasten to proclaim: we should then soon realize that true heroes and martyrs are not more rare now than in days gone by; only that they are not to be met with all and exclusively on the scaffold and on the field of battle.

To bring back the light of their home to what it used to be in her mother's lifetime, was now Anna's ardent ambition. Her mother! of whom, be it confessed, she had almost ceased to think of late! The very thought of her infused peace and confidence into Anna's soul.

No sooner had Anna made up her mind that reparation was possible, than everything around her seemed to resume its former beauty. The blue heavens seemed indeed not only to encircle the earth in their embrace, but to permeate her very being. The good woman had never before understood, that when once heaven is in the heart, it makes a heaven of every place upon earth.

Strong in this new sensation, and alive as it were with a new life, she at last turned homewards, the hens and pigeons welcoming her, and accompanying her to the kitchen door, where they stationed themselves, respectfully awaiting their supper. This she soon brought them, scattering it amongst them smilingly, and with infinite amusement at their hungry little quarrels. The dog trotted up without putting the poultry to flight, and laid his head in Anna's lap, not deigning to notice the strokes dealt him by the cat—seeing that the latter had retired her claws, and simply wanted to rouse her old comrade. Anna could not be insensible to this peaceful and friendly scene: she caressed first one animal and

then another; and finally her eyes filled with tears.

If a dog and cat live together so amicably, simply by force of habit and association, how can a couple whom God has made for each other decline in tenderness as they advance in years?

Night stealing on, she watched how the birds flew to the forest, the pigeons to their house; and how all the household returned home one after another in like manner. Those whose work was not yet ended came in hurriedly and heated: others, who had only supper and bed before them, arrived leisurely. The women-servants presented an aspect between the two; for they walked along the footpaths rapidly, yet not without occasionally stopping to gather a flower or tighten a garter, availing themselves of the opportunity for looking behind to see whether really any one whom they particularly wished to see was trying to overtake them.

Andrew came home from the village with a heavy heart; Felix with an air of gaiety, but not of the true kind. Annette came in at the back door, no one knew where from. Christian had not yet returned, and Anna's eyes sought him anxiously. At last he appeared, with hesitation in his face, like a vessel nearing port with a contrary wind. At the sight of him Anna's heart began to beat, for she could see from his face

what was passing within. Feeling her courage and confidence giving way, she retreated into the house; for to speak a word of welcome at that moment she could not. Christian felt her avoiding him.

"She might at least have said, 'good evening,'" he thought to himself, "and have let sulking alone for the Sunday." So his countenance thereupon became obviously darker; so much so that Annette, who had just come in, and was going up to her father with a pleased, important expression, as though about to make some confidential communication to him, checked herself instantly, and went into the garden instead, giving the dog an impatient kick as she passed out.

The coffee and fried potatoes were already on the table, and one by one all were drawing to it slowly. Anna, full of a sense of profound humility, was more amiable and demonstrative than usual, and spoke affably to them all. She resumed an office that she had neglected for some time,—that of herself pouring out the coffee all round, beginning with Christian. After the coffee, she took the milk jug, and knowing that Christian had a weakness for the skin on the top of scalded milk, she put almost the whole of it into his cup.

"Stop, stop! that's enough!" he exclaimed.

"Nay, there's plenty left," rejoined Anna; at which Christian could hardly believe his ears.

"Now," he thought to himself, "if this might only last!" and quite softened, he commenced to chat; so much so that Felix began—rather characteristically—to wonder whether his father had not cheered himself by taking an extra glass of wine. (In reality he had not tasted wine that day.)

"After all, Christian's not so very glum," thought Anna, hopefully; and after washing up, and putting the kitchen to rights, she went and sat outside with the rest. Here she joined in the conversation, which was pleasantly prolonged; and the moon was high in the heavens when the family retired for the night. Anna went in last, fastened the door, saw to the fire being quite out and everything in its place, and then went to her room, on the threshold of which she hesitated, as though it had been a sanctuary. She undressed without saying a word, and sat down, resolved to pray aloud as of old, but it seemed impossible to break the silence. For a long time she sat mute; she tried to speak, but not a word would come forth. She longed to lie down and bury her head in her pillow; everything argued within her, that to-night it was useless to make the effort; that to-morrow she would be stronger to do so; but every moment the words of the pastor resounded in her ears, especially that passage respecting the "mother of a family," and the one that spoke of heaven being

a life of "Eternal Peace," and of the presumption of any who hope to enter there cherishing rancour while on earth. Again she essayed to speak; and in doing so her whole soul welled forth in an agonised prayer of "Oh, my God, forsake me not!" Immediately a dead weight appeared to be lifted off her heart; the chains that seemed to have tightened round it were burst, her lips trembled, but spoke; and slowly, and with a quivering voice, she uttered the words:

"Our Father, which art in heaven;" ... At the first sound, Christian started up as though he had heard a cry of "Fire!" In an instant his voice joined in with hers; and when they reached the clause "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," both voices changed to sobs, till Christian alone, after a plentiful relief of tears, had to finish the prayer himself. Thus these divine petitions, like a radiant sun, banished the dark cloud that had oppressed and enveloped them till they could no longer clearly see each other, and once again revealed the face of heaven.

Anna was the first to speak, accusing herself and humbling herself to Christian.

"Oh! no; it is I who have been to blame," exclaimed he: "if I had only listened to you, all this would never have happened:" and each began to find afresh so much generosity and kind-

liness, which only a few little words had been wanting to bring out. Neither one nor the other had realized all this: each had imagined the other to be animated by quite different feelings; feelings which would make reconciliation impossible. Nothing, indeed, short of Anna's deep compunction would have availed under such circumstances. May it not be, that God has not only hidden from us the future, but also veiled from us the hearts of our fellow men, in order that we may do justly and love mercy, without estimating our chances of success, and without measuring our efforts against the formidableness of the combat?

These two worthy people at first could hardly believe their ears: they could hardly understand their newly-found happiness: they dreaded least each word might chance to give fresh offence, and bring on the blackness of darkness again; so that they chose their words with the touching tenderness that a mother would evince in dressing the wound of her child. This new strain called forth a new phase of their affection; and when they had begun to feel more sure of each other, and were confident that the peace and happiness of each would henceforth be the other's care, then their joy and relief was like that of a man who has awoke from a hideous dream of hell and the company of the doomed in inextinguishable fire, to find himself resting on the bosom of his God.

"Oh! if I had only known this," exclaimed Anna, again and again, with fresh tears; "it should never have got to this length! But then I ought to have had more faith in you. Ah! I see now, that in giving way to distrust and suspicion, we lose all our light and all our love; and if we are not actually in hell, we have a hell within our hearts."

Christian thereupon would strive to console Anna, and complain of himself for having indulged in exactly the same feelings; both were amazed at themselves for having stupidly testified their attachment by their sullenness, and for having mistaken for unkindness what was in reality a crushing sorrow. It had been as though each were speaking to the other in an unknown tongue; so that it is no wonder they had read each other backwards. Then they thought over their respective shortcomings, and the more they reposed confidence in each other, the more disgusted they became with their own conduct. Anna continually reproaching herself for having closed her heart against her husband, and remembering how her mother used always to say, that those whose occupations separate them during the daytime, should of all people be the most careful to meet again at night at the footstool of Grace.

"Ah, but I should have acted a very different

part," replied Christian to re-assure her. "I have made others suffer terribly by my fault; and now, if I have closed hearts, you have opened them again: you have been the reconciler. If all this hadn't happened, I should never have known how much more valuable peace is than two hundred pounds, and how little happiness can be measured by money. Many a time I've felt enraged to see my labourers sitting down to table with faces so much happier than my own. Oh, no! money isn't everything. Peace before money any day!"

But the climax of their happiness was the thought of their children. They had suffered cruelly during their parents' misunderstanding; for if each limb suffers when the body is in pain, so every member of a family sensibly suffers when one member of it is soul-sick, especially if this sickness attacks the heads of the family. They perceived now why light-heartedness and youthful joviality had vanished from among them, and how their quarrel had, as it were, rusted their children's hearts and petrified their own, making them impervious to any impressions but those of personal animosity and money. Not only had they ceased to care for the future of those belonging to them—generally such an absorbing anxiety to parents—but they had begun to find their children an embarrassment to them, instead of

their chief joy and comfort, as they should naturally be.

But now their hearts had re-expanded: now their children's happiness had become their happiness; and they revelled in the thought of the satisfaction these children would feel when once they knew that this miserable quarrel was made up. Yes, they should feel their parents' tenderness as they had never felt it before: they should feel as though all this coldness had been but a feint prior to a surprise of fondness—like the feigned sternness of a parent about to bound towards an expectant child and smother it with kisses.

"But tell me now, Anna," exclaimed Christian suddenly, "how was it that your heart was touched at last, and that you once more prayed aloud? For my part, I had been wishing and intending for a long time to speak to you seriously, but I never could. I was so impressed with the idea, that I couldn't find a word to say. I don't think my mouth could have been forced open!"

Then Anna began to recount her presentiment of death, and her walk to church, during which the strange feeling had come over her of being the last person left in the world, and being obliged to hurry on to overtake the others; and then of her being carried to her grave and no one shedding a tear; and, finally, of finding no place kept for her in heaven, any more than she had found at church,

till the poor woman had made room for her; and how the pastor had exhorted them all to take each meal as though it were to be the last, and especially the Supper of the Lord; and how this was never to be received till all rancour and enmity was banished from the heart; and how we should cease to imagine that we are certainly right and others in the wrong, but rather accuse ourselves, and act accordingly,—words that had filled her with remorse and dread, and decided her not to lose an hour in seeking to make peace.

"I felt convinced," she said, "that death was near; and I thought, 'Oh, if I should lose my little place in heaven!' But what was I to do? I could think of no way to bring it about, till yesterday afternoon it all flashed upon me, that it was I who ought to speak, for perhaps after all it was I who was most in fault. And then think of my agitation, not knowing whether you would be disposed for peace or not. I thought I should have had to pray silently after the Lord's Prayer for a long long time to myself before your heart would be softened; and the fear pressed upon me so, that of myself I could never have spoken the words. But once enabled to begin, I wouldn't go back! for, oh! I wanted at least to die in peace! Then, when you all at once joined in, I felt as I should have felt if you had been for days buried away from me under ground, and I had been

digging and groping in vain to find you, and you had suddenly re-appeared at my side safe and sound. Yes! now I have found you, never to lose you again—never, never, so long as I live! Now I'm sure you will weep when I am carried to the grave. I'm sure now, that when that day comes, and you bury your face in your handkerchief, you'll say to yourself: 'Ah! Anna was a good wife to me; if I had to live my life over again I would never choose any other: it's a terrible loss for me, and not for me only!'"

"Nay, Anna," Christian replied, "don't speak in this way of dying. You might have died any time, and I should have wept for you bitterly, for indeed you have been a good wife to me. I have loved you through thick and thin; and I should have forgotten everything I had ever felt against you, and remembered only all your goodness and tenderness, your activity and your management, which surpasses any other woman's I have ever known or heard of. But don't go on speaking of dying; we're going to live happily together I truly believe for a long time to come, and you will always be the very joy of my life."

"Listen, Christian," replied Anna; "you've always been an excellent husband, and never better than now; but don't be angry with me if I tell you that I firmly believe I have not long to live: the

very fact that I am so strangely happy now—yes, more so than I can explain or express—makes me all the more sure of it. But we won't talk any more of that; let us leave it with God, who orders everything for the best and happiest. But there's just one thing you must promise me: next Sunday is Whitsunday; we must go to church and partake of the Lord's Supper together, as a token of perfect pardon—pardon that would satisfy us if we knew that we were partaking of it for the last time, and were about to be called to appear before God, Till we have done so I shall not feel sure that we have made peace for time and for eternity: I shall be constantly fearing lest the enemy should separate us again; but when once we have pledged ourselves in the presence of God, I shall feel we are safe, and I shall say—'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.'"

"Anna, dear Anna," exclaimed Christian once again; "don't, don't speak of dying. Why should you die just when life's best worth living? Would it be like God's goodness? I'll go with you to church with all my heart next Sunday, and the children shall come too. Won't they be happy to see that all our strife is over! And other people will see this too. I know they've been talking against me famously; but they may talk on now for aught I care, now that we are happy again in each other. It's odd! I know very little about religion, and I

very seldom go to church—busy people like me are not often able to go, besides our heads are too full of other things to understand much about religion—still, I own that I've never once been to church, nor to the Lord's Supper, but what I've wished to go again. I've felt refreshed by it somehow in my soul, just as I feel my body refreshed when I take a bath. I feel to have got fresh courage; my eyes see things more clearly, and I'm able to take things as they come much more calmly. I sometimes think, that if we throw off all the concerns of the week, and put on more solemn ones—just as we put on a clean shirt—on a Sunday, there wouldn't be so many scoundrels in the world as there are now: but unfortunately one does not often act up to these ideas when they occur; more's the pity. Yes, next Sunday we'll certainly go to church together; and God and man shall see whether we care for each other or not."

Joy and peace robbed the worthy couple of their sleep; and daylight dawned, inviting mankind to arise and witness the splendid rising of the sun, and to betake themselves to their work without losing any of his rays.

The good old couple entered upon the new day in a state of ecstasy: old evils had disappeared, and a new life had dawned in their hearts: indeed, life seemed to them many times more precious than it had ever been before. Their joy, however, did

not express itself in any definite words: all went on just as usual in the house; only a deep peace shone in every countenance. It was touching to see these two old people trotting after each other just like any young couple the day after their wedding; their only anxiety being the fear of losing sight of each other for an instant. Christian kept coming into the kitchen perpetually to light his pipe; and he had hardly gone out, when Anna would set out after him to tell or to ask him something. The children clearly perceived the change, but said nothing. While Andrew was feeding the horses in the stable, his father went to him, and began to talk about the horses and cows, discussing whether it might not be well to renew the stock, and proposed that Andrew should go next fair-day to Berne to look out; adding, that as it would be his concern some day, the sooner he accustomed himself to these transactions the better, so that experience might not cost him more than need be. Andrew could hardly believe his ears, especially when his father continued to follow him about through the farm-yard, and assented to everything he said.

The same thing precisely came to pass with regard to Annette and her mother, who had together gone out into the field to plant cabbages. Anna began by passing in review Annette's wardrobe, and mentioned some bodices that she thought

of making for her as soon as she could get the workwoman to come: her spencer, she remarked, was quite worn out; she must certainly have another. If she liked, she might go that evening and see if there was anything suitable for making it at the village shop; and if not, she might wait till the next time she went to any of the fairs, where she would have more choice.

Annette, like Andrew, could hardly believe her ears: she thought her mother must be beside herself; and her conscience smote her for her peevishness the evening before. She was quite afraid to take in earnest what her mother had said, lest it should all be explained the opposite way the next minute; so she answered in few words, and anxiously awaited the conclusion. When she found that it was all meant seriously, and that her mother had nothing but kind words to say to her, she was indeed astonished, thinking to herself, "Oh, that this would but last! but it'll soon come to an end."

Nevertheless it continued: kind and cheerful words resounded through the household; the busy wheels of which went round with redoubled alacrity.

It was like one of those bright warm days of the early spring, when the sun's rays awaken the slumbering soil, and everything shoots up with a murmur of life. The frame of man dilates; his

rekindled strength impels him to action, and his heart expands with joyful gratitude to God.

Conjugal love is the flame that illumines the family hearth. When it is lacking, a wintry frost invades the household, and all is torpid and inert; yes, and exposed to rain and snow, and to all the ravages of the storm. Let this sunshine return, and involuntarily everything thaws; the storm ceases, the rain disappears, everything returns to a joyous animation, and the voice of joy and gladness is heard again, as that of the skylark resounds over its home when the air is serene and the sky blue.

Annette had set off full speed about the cloth for her spencer, and in quest of the workwoman. Andrew fell into frequent conversation with his father, and hovered about his mother; while Felix sat leaning his head on his hand, with a jug of tea before him, which his mother had already twice refilled; at heart, however, he was gay and satisfied—his father having proposed of his own accord to have the doctor sent for. Thus a whole week passed without a single returning cloud, and each evening there had been a deeper peace round the family hearth; so that by Saturday Anna had ceased to fear the return of evil days.

Saturday arrived, and with it the holiday rest, strictly observed in this and many other houses on the eve of the Sabbath. After six o'clock,

when the church bell has rung, it is customary here for all labour to cease: any work that is not completed will perhaps be resumed on the morrow, rather than finished after this hour. Whether this be a remnant of the ancient Jewish Sabbath, or a Christian arrangement intended to lull the cares of the week to repose, it is impossible to say: anyhow, it is highly appreciated, especially by the young and by the servants of a household.

Christian was in his accustomed seat outside the house, and Andrew with him. Felix stood about two paces off, looking ill and suffering, and Annette was tending her flowers.

Anna soon stepped out and asked Christian whether he had told them.

"No, no," he replied; "you will do it much better."

"As you please. You know, children, that there has been a misunderstanding for a long time between your father and me: we didn't mean any harm, but we lost faith in one another. In one sense it was over-anxiety about all of you, for who but their children do parents save for? It was all, or nearly all, my fault, and I was committing a great sin; but my eyes were opened to see it at last; and I confessed this to your father, and he has forgiven me: so now it's my desire that we should all go to church together to-morrow and take the Communion."

"But, mother," interposed Christian, "remember I was just as much in fault as you. I was going against our happiness just as much, and if it had been left to me we might never have made it up."

"Well, well, father, we won't quarrel about that. I think I know my faults better than you do; and I remember better than you do how often I have tormented you, because you wouldn't make more money. But now I see clearly that money and happiness are two very different things; and I think you do too: indeed, I now believe we shall never forget this as long as we live. God Himself has taught us the lesson, and all I desire now is to thank Him, and to seal our pardon in his presence; so that when you lose me you may have nothing to reproach me with before God or man."

"Why, mother, which of us has anything to reproach you with, or father either? We were sorry enough to see you so cast down about money, and all for our sakes; but we didn't know what to do for the best: afterwards we felt that all this was changed, and that some cloud had disappeared from before the sun. We felt so much happier all at once, it seemed as though we had wings! Oh, yes! by all means let us go and take the Communion to-morrow; not as a sign of pardon, but by way of thanksgiving to God; not

with any idea of your dying, mother, but because we all so truly love you, and because we are all of one heart now in the sight of God, and wish everyone to know it."

"And I, too, have something to be sorry for," exclaimed Annette; "but now, if we are to go to church all together to-morrow, I must really set off at once to the village to see about my new spencer, for without it I positively shouldn't be fit to be seen."

"Always the same, Annette," replied her father; "always some folly in your head, or you would be thinking more of the solemnity of a whole family going to partake together of the Lord's Supper, instead of thinking of your finery. If you go on this way, only thinking of your clothes, and caring for nothing better, you'll always be unhappy yourself, and make those belonging to you unhappy. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also; and when the treasure is lost, misery follows. You see I know it all now, so let us choose a treasure that we can't lose, and that will never make us hate God or man. No, Annette, let your new spencer alone to-day, and stay with us: you shall read me a chapter to give you something to think about! you need not attend to me though: I hope I'm not so much in want of something solemn to think about. I know lots off by heart that you don't. No, no,—girls shouldn't be thinking of

their dress when they're going to take the Communion."

"Oh! father, don't be angry; it was very thoughtless of me; indeed I'll stay at home with you. Don't imagine that I can think of nothing better than my spencer. To-morrow, with God's help, He shall see that there is room in my heart at least for my father and mother; and I'll try to deserve their love. Won't I, mother?" she continued caressing Anna's gentle cheek as a little child would.

"Yes, yes; you're a good girl," replied her mother, "although one sometimes doesn't quite know what to make of you. When I'm gone, Annette will not be one of the worst of housekeepers; she'll show you all she can think of something better than nonsense."

And thus, loving and hopeful talk beguiled the time till late into the night. Nothing could make Anna swerve from her fixed idea that the solemn service on the morrow would be the last time she would partake of the Lord's Supper with her husband and children. Always calm and cheerful, she still dwelt upon it. She spoke of presentiments that had occurred to others of her family, which impressed the children deeply. As for Christian, he concluded by saying he would go in and comfort himself by reading a chapter of the Bible: "there's no doubt about that being true,

whatever we may think about anything else; and whatever fears we may have about what may perhaps never come to pass. For myself, I have a good hope that God will spare us to each other for a long time yet: having seen our quarrel, He will approve of our reconciliation, and give us time to enjoy it." And so, edified by the reading of God's Word, and in a state of mind as grave almost as if they had been assisting at a last Communion, they betook themselves to rest.

Whitsunday is always a solemn occasion in the country: no sound of carriages or horses, no gadding about to try and get out of the reach of God and of one's conscience. For this one day, at least, it is remembered, that though we take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, even there will his hand find us, and his right hand overtake us. Peace and silence reign more or less in every home: a silence without broken only by the rustling of the branches, and within by the sighings and workings of the conscience—an upheaving which finds vent in prayer. In the house of Christian and Anna every heart was passing in review the sinful time that had just ended; every heart blessed God at the thought that it was over; all showed by their manner, or rather by the expression of their eyes and by the tone of their voices, that a deep respect for each other

had arisen within them, and that it was good to be together, and each knew that this was felt by all.

Even Annette was very much impressed, and forgot all about her new spencer while putting on her old one. She was soon ready, and went to gather a sprig of rosemary for her mother. She offered some to her brothers also, but they remarked that they didn't want any that day. All were ready at the door, waiting for the mother, who had many parting injunctions to give to the servants about not burning the dinner, and not leaving the house empty. She had begged them not to wait for her, but none of the party would on any account have started without her, and none of them showed the least impatience.

When she appeared at last, full of apologies for all this delay, Christian assured her that they would have waited willingly twice as long; adding, "If you are late, isn't it out of care for our comfort? We only think of ourselves, but you think of all of us." And now they set out at a quiet pace, all animated by one tender, solemn, sentiment. Is there a lovelier sight than that of a whole family peaceably going to church together, not one of them thinking himself better than another, all filled with the same faith, all full of love to the same Saviour, all united in the same aims on earth, and all looking forward to the same heaven?

Yes, happy the parents who are accompanied by

their grown-up children to the same church, to which as infants they carried them for baptism. "Behold us, Lord," they exclaim in their hearts, "behold us, and the children Thou hast given us; not one of them is lost, and Thou hast sanctified us through them."

They were not long alone; greetings and meetings multiplied. Some of those on the road moderated their pace; others quickened theirs, all for the same friendly purpose. Why should it be so only on the way to church? Why not always on the great highway of life? It would greatly conduce to our happiness.

Many were astonished to see these five people together, but didn't betray this. Every one had their own private suppositions on the subject, which they purposed propounding at dinner-time, and didn't fail to do so.

Anna's agitation at church the preceding Sunday had not been unnoticed; but no one had hit upon the fact, because to discover a truth there must be a relative sentiment in the mind of the discoverer —whence the infinite number of ignorant misrepresentations, and the characteristic misinterpretations of noble or generous actions, quite above the comprehension of the interpreter.

As they neared the church the road became more thronged; and though they arrived early, they had some little difficulty in finding places. Whit-

sunday or not, it is always well to be in church in good time, for if the walk has been hurried, it is hardly possible that the thoughts can be quiet and calm. And this is even more true of the pastor; for there must be order and calm around as if we would secure peaceful meditation within, as the wind must cease to blow if the waves are to be at rest. Tranquilly seated, the measured peal of the bells heard outside, and then the solemn tones of the organ within, little by little the eye of the mind opens in the secret recesses, as the physical eye opens little by little in the darkness of a cave; so that when the words of Scripture are heard, and the pastor proceeds to scatter good seed from it, it falls into hearts open for its reception, instead of only into ears, and those ears too often deaf!

The minister opened the Bible, and read these words as his text:

"What lack I yet?" Words that, far from impressing or arousing the congregation, at first only astonished them, for want of any skill they themselves would have had to draw a lesson from them.

The minister began by reminding them of his exhortations of last Sunday; how he had conjured them to look upon each Communion as possibly their last, and to be reconciled to every one.

"But," he continued, "we have also something to think of besides those we are about to leave

behind. It is not only necessary to bid adieu before our journey; we must prepare ourselves for it, we must think what awaits us where we are going. We must each ask ourselves, 'Am I ready?' 'What lack I yet?' 'Have I all that is necessary for entering heaven?'

"Now, there are many, many persons, confidently anticipating heaven, but sadly deceiving themselves. Many who are self-satisfied, consider themselves models for imitation, look down upon their fellow men, consider their own faults and errors in the light of virtues, and actually expect that God will accept them as such; just as a fraudulent tradesman might hope to pass off some worthless pebble for a precious stone.

"It is one thing to think of death as an event in the distance: we flatter ourselves that it will not, after all, be so very sad to die; but it is a very different thing to feel death near, especially if it comes suddenly. What we fancied easy, may prove very hard indeed; for the eye is opened then to many things which had not been perceived before.

"Remember the young man who came to Jesus, so confident of obtaining eternal life, and imagining it such an easy thing to obtain, because he had already done so much, and observed the Commandments from his youth. 'What lack I yet?' was his question, and you will remember

that he was to go and sell all, and give to the poor. This was what he was not at all prepared for, and he went away abashed. He thought he had done all, and was ready; but he lacked yet the one thing needful: he lacked everything. He lacked the spirit of Christian obedience—obedience even unto death; he lacked the love of God above all, and of his neighbour as himself. He was ready for everything—everything he had been accustomed to—but he was not ready for what the Saviour required of him. He had seemed faithful while his fidelity had not been put to the proof. He lacked the spirit of truth, that spirit which can preserve a man in all circumstances, keeping him still a child of God in spite of everything; as the apostle Paul was enabled to speak the truth without flinching in the presence of each of his judges.

"Now there are thousands of persons just as much mistaken about themselves as this rich young man, unconscious that they lack everything. They live a peacefully decent life, following in the footsteps of their parents before them. They neither raise nor encounter any obstacle in life, and they are living for an end, but that end is one purely temporal—that is, gain. This principle has a complete ascendency over them without their knowing it; but let something surprise them out of the quiet of their life; let some sacrifice be

required of them; let God lay his hand upon their fortunes, and alter the current of their lives; let their ways, without infringing the laws, injure others, troubling their own lives, and then it will be seen wherein they are lacking: then it will appear what their lives rest upon; how they are ruled, instead of being the rulers; for what they lack is the spirit of Christ. Their pecuniary anxieties make them forget God; they lose confidence in Him; they cast off submission to his will. They trouble themselves, and wander from the narrow path, like the rich young man in the Gospel history. They become bitter against their fellow men; they can't bring themselves to alter any of their ways: peace and harmony are marred within them, because they are resting on a wrong foundation—on material circumstances, on the ordinary current of their lives, and not on that spirit from above, and abiding within, which is ever ready for self-sacrifice, which is ready to pluck out the right eye or to cut off the right hand that might offend. And yet they must be aware that their peace is wounded: their own conscience must tell them that God does not take precedence of everything in their thoughts, and that the very least trifle will suffice to overwhelm them. Ah! yes, how many persons, and not only persons, but households, are ruined through not knowing what they lack! To-day is the day of Pentecost; the return of that day on which God

visibly poured out his Holy Spirit upon all who prayed and waited for it. Let them, let us all, earnestly pray for and seek it, as the most precious of all his gifts to man. Yea, let us strive to obtain it though the effort should cost us life itself.

"This is the spirit which, in Christ, overcame the world; and none can live in the world, and yet overcome it, but through the spirit of Christ. It is more precious than gold or silver: the world cannot seize upon it, death cannot destroy it. It is the safeguard of happiness in all vicissitudes, of peace in all homes, of satisfaction in all hearts. This it is which gives us a foretaste of perfect rest. This is the key which opens to us the gates of heaven. Without it we can as little enter there as a camel can pass through the eye of a needle. The rich man's fortune is an especial stumbling-block, because he too often places his happiness in his wealth, forgetting that there is a far better wealth—riches which he need not leave behind him when called away from earth. When his wealth takes to itself wings, he feels that all is over with him: he is like a drowning man who lacks presence of mind to see the hand stretched out to save him; or who casts it aside, instead of seizing it, and sinks to the bottom."

Such were the main ideas developed by the pastor, and adapted, to the best of his ability, to the circumstances of his congregation.

To Christian and his family they were living words: the pebble had become a diamond, which was illumining their inmost souls. The minister seemed to them to be reading their heart's history from beginning to end,—the history of the error that had been leading them on to the brink of the precipice; and then the history of that which alone could save them,—indeed, that which had saved them already. It was a very feast of Pentecost within their hearts: they felt a gracious influence within them, which nothing earthly could be compared to; they felt that they had been turned from dwelling upon darkness to behold the rising of the orient sun. Outwardly stupefied, yet inwardly keenly aroused, they had listened to that history of their lives as it was detailed to the whole congregation. There might have been a magic mirror in the pulpit in which each of them could read their individual secrets; and yet not a shade of vexation was felt at the idea of this publicity: they were glad it should be so, that their example might be a warning to others; in fact from time to time they had been on the verge of expressing audible assents to what was said. If the minister had spoken of them by name, they would not have taken it amiss; so completely did they take for granted that every one knew about whom he was preaching.

When he had ended, they felt every good resolution within them ratified and confirmed. They had

found a treasure in the field already, but now they knew the value of it. When the invitation was pronounced, to all who desired to live as disciples of Christ, it awakened such an echo in their hearts as had never answered before. It was like a personal appeal, to which they would have responded with audible thanks; and in drawing near to the altar, they walked, not as though by right of permission, but as if impelled by an irresistible impulse. All personal details became absorbed in a sense of union with the Father, through the Son, through the influence of the indwelling Spirit: a union which they were now to celebrate, in the conviction that neither height nor depth, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor death, nor any living creature could henceforth separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

They left the church at last, full of a deep but serious joy. When their neighbours surrounded them, they felt surprised that no personal comments were made. One remarked that she wished the minister would not always preach against avarice. Another, that she was quite sure it was a hit against her, and that really, on a festival Sunday, it was not at all the thing: but she knew it was because she had given nothing at the last collection; yet surely her money was her own, to do what she liked with. It should be a long time before he should see her at church again!

Accordingly every one looked at the sermon from a different point of view; but nearly all were agreed in having disliked it, and in wishing that the minister would preach better, which they knew he could if he only would.

Some few individuals, however, were exceptions, and walked along thoughtfully, pondering in silence what they had heard. This reserve arises sometimes from a reluctance to let others know that we have been led to recognise our faults, or it may proceed from a dread of ridicule on exposing the emotions awakened. This was somewhat the case with Christian and Anna and their children. They were surprised and delighted that the application, which was so very clear to themselves, had not been perceived by the public; and they kept their thoughts to themselves, save to remark that they thought every one might find something to suit them in such a sermon as that; and that it would be no bad thing if they did, and acted accordingly.

The afternoon was still and solemn. The servants were out; everything around the house was radiant, and the orchard, with its thick shades and gentle murmurs, attracted the family one by one. Some stood leaning against one of the trees; others strolled about, occasionally levelling a mole-hill with a touch of the foot: finally they assembled under an enormous apple-tree, sitting

or reclining on the grass, and speaking out all that was passing within. The sermon had produced the same impression upon all: they had all seen in the magic mirror the circumstances they had just emerged from; and all testified to the truth of the pastor's words as to the one essential thing being the spirit of Christ, whereas all their preoccupation had been about money: all realized how Christ alone can still such a tempest as had arisen in their hearts. "I feel I'm growing old," suddenly ejaculated Christian: "it is too late for me to try new ways of farming, and yet I fancy there may be ways better than mine. I'm more than half inclined to give it up to you young people. If you can get on well together, I don't see why the thing shouldn't be done at once, and answer perfectly."

"Nor I either," responded Anna: "I'm perfectly ready and willing to retire with your father and live at the back of the house; or we might build a couple of rooms over the bakehouse: it wouldn't cost much. If we can help you with our advice, or any bit of work, we shall always be there, and it may be pleasant for you sometimes. But Andrew must marry while I'm here to see about it: Annette wouldn't wish to be here for ever, and if Felix should chance to marry first, and had to look forward to the farm going to Andrew, it might be awkward."

"No, indeed, mother, I won't have it," interrupted Andrew; "I'm perfectly content to go on helping father as much as I can, as is only my duty. I don't want to take the plough out of his hand. As for my marrying, who knows whether I ever shall? But one thing's certain; and that is, that I won't drive you out of the kitchen: I love you a great deal too well for that. Here you've been for thirty years, managing everything marvellously—it's much if any one that comes after you is worthy to untie your shoe-strings."

"Nonsense, Andrew," interposed Felix; "it's clear that some one must marry, you or I. For my part I've quite decided never to do any such thing. It's not for a poor sickly fellow like me to look out for a wife; she'd be sure to lose me before the year was out. No, I shall be quite content to stay quietly with you; we've always been good friends. It's for you to marry: besides, didn't you once tell me that you had something in view? I shouldn't have overlooked the matter this way but for all our troubles of late; but I'm quite sure you've not forgotten it, for you've never cared to go out and look about you ever since."

Andrew blushed, and was going to demur, when his mother exclaimed, "Ah, by-the-by, how was it about the young peasant girl from Dorngrüt? I remember you asked me about her one day so oddly. I don't think I cared to hear much about

it then, and I've often been sorry for it since. I've been on the point of asking you about her more than once, but the opportunity hasn't come; and besides, I was wishing you would begin. Are you seriously thinking of her?"

"Well, hardly that."

"Come now, candidly, Andrew; you know if you are in earnest about her, we might help you; but if you don't speak out, you may repent it for ever."

"Well, mother, if you wish to know, I'll tell you that this girl has pleased me as no other ever has, and I've decided to have her or none; but I doubt whether anything can ever come of it."

"And why not? Have you asked her?"

"No, not yet; and yet I feel sure of it all the same."

"But how can you know, when you have never asked? Things turn out sometimes very differently from what we expect. Or is she engaged to some one else?"

"I don't know, and I've never asked any questions about her. I've an impression that it won't do; but one may be mistaken: and then there's another thing."

"What's that? Is there anything against the family?"

"Yes, and no. The father is very rich, and horribly covetous. I have heard that scarcely

any one would be rich enough for his son-in-law, and that he would drive a terribly hard bargain. He has already married two of his daughters to his mind, having first secured that both his sons-in-law should come in for everything in their own families, their brothers and sisters having nothing. Such conditions would certainly not suit me; if I were to wrong my brothers and sisters so, I should confidently expect my children and grandchildren to suffer for it. I don't wish for more than my rightful share; and I hope that, please God, it may be a long time before we have to settle that."

"Listen, Andrew," said Annette, "if that's all that's in the way of your happiness, I'll give up all thoughts of marrying, so as to save my dowry. Many married people would give all they possess to be single again. I know I'm well off here with father and mother, but I don't know how it might fare with me in a home of my own."

"Yes," added Felix, "if the girl pleases you, do your best in the matter, and we will all help you to the utmost. As to the farm, if father wishes to make it over to you for a suitable sum, I won't oppose it."

"Nay, but I won't have father and mother give up what belongs to them, and tie their own hands for the sake of one of their children. I wouldn't consent to it for the sake of any girl I've taken a

fancy to; especially now that we're all so happy together again."

"If it were possible, it would be the very thing I should wish," rejoined Anna; "when I come to die, which will be before long, it will be a great consolation to me to have seen your wife."

"Pray, mother, don't speak again about dying. You mustn't die; and I'm not likely to be married."

"Why not?" exclaimed Felix; "you surely don't suppose that everything is to go on just as it is now for ever? Why shouldn't you make the attempt! The great thing is just to know what the girl herself says,—yes, or no. If we only knew this it might all be arranged. Haven't you tried to get any clue to it?"

"No," answered Andrew; "feeling convinced it would be of no use, I've only tried to forget her as soon as possible."

"Now really that's wrong," answered Felix. "I shall try for you, for I'm bent upon your having a good wife, and mother's impatient for a daughter-in-law; so I mean her to have one by Easter at the latest, as certain as my name's Felix. If you, father, will give me a few crowns in my pocket—all mine have decamped—I'll go on the pretext of buying horses, or cows, or sheep, or anything you like, to Dorugrüt in disguise, to get a peep at the girl and a word or two with her, just to find out

which way the wind blows, and what had better be done."

"Do as you please," said Andrew. "I thank you with all my heart for your offers, but I won't meddle in the matter, nor be at all responsible. You're all a great deal too good to me."

"But a week ago," remarked Anna, "I should little have thought of anything like this happening. If any one had predicted it, I should have been incredulous. But to God nothing is impossible. He sends calamities as unexpectedly as a thief in the night, and can He not also send joy and prosperity as suddenly, when He sees hearts ready for it?"

"Hark! what is that?" cried Andrew hurriedly. (The alarm bell was pealing on every side.)

"It's fire!" they all cried, rising abruptly; "and where?" No smoke was visible anywhere, but as they looked about only a semicircle of the horizon was visible. They ran into the house. Two minutes later Andrew appeared with the fire-buckets and ropes on his shoulders, running full speed towards the tower from which the bell pealed louder and louder; and this peaceful family scene was speedily put to confusion.

But the spirit of it remained, and would be ever ready to testify to its existence by re-producing similar scenes.

PART III.

How many different languages a bell may speak, each awakening a different emotion in the human heart! The Sabbath church bell speaks gravely, as though conveying a message from heaven. The funeral bell has a dumb, mysterious sound, as of the heavy fall of earth upon a coffin, and seems to hush all the echoes of earth. The evening bell caresses the air softly, speaking of sympathy, hospitality, and rest: it invites us to rest our cares and toils upon God. But the fire-bell arouses all that can be roused within us: women turn pale, children tremble and weep, and the hearts of strong men beat terribly. The longer it peals, the more plaintive it becomes.

Andrew found half the village assembled at the station of the fire-engines, situated, as is usually the case, in the very centre of the village. Some were steadfastly watching the dark and wreathing pile of smoke in the distance, which was becoming more and more black and dense. Others hurried about, manœuvring the pumps, fixing on the tubes, and hanging up the buckets. Then came a call for

horses, which no one seemed inclined to supply—a mortification and misery of constant occurrence on these occasions. Others called for "candles for the lanterns:" no one spoke of having any at home, but all testified to there being plenty to be had at the shop!

"Where is the fire?" hastily demanded Andrew on arriving.

"No one knows exactly," was the reply; "but it seems to be in the direction of Oberkirch; and it must be a fearful conflagration; it seems to be spreading every minute."

"Where is the lantern-bearer?"

"Who knows? He was not at church this morning, nor in the afternoon either: he must have gone away somewhere, either to buy a cow or to get married; the first most likely, because he sold two last week."

"See! here! Who'll carry these ropes? I'll carry the lantern and take the lead. If no horses are to be had here, let some one go to our farm for them, and quickly. It would be a disgrace to the parish if they were not forthcoming: it's by these things a place shows what sort of people it's made of."

This remark hurt the more, because it came from a young man who had as yet nothing of his own to offer, and fell upon grey-heads, who considered themselves the very props of the parish.

"Come, if every stripling may take upon himself this way," said the Mayor, "I've nothing more to do here:" but this was only when he had seen Andrew fairly started. "A fool like that does not know that, before putting the horses to they must be fed, and very often before that's over the fire's ended."

Nevertheless the fire-engines were nearing the scene of the disaster at a brisk trot, accompanied by a goodly number of people, who would have found it impossible to stay at home when there was distress anywhere.

The nearer they approached, the more the huge black column towered before them, the more the bells pealed, and the more mournfully, and the more the hurrying crowd increased. There was no longer any question of where it was: there it stood; black, horrible, fierce, rising portentously before them. The volunteers rushed into the thick of it, heedless of danger, as the vanguard of a regiment plunges into the thick of the battle. Others ran round, eagerly looking out for favourable situations for the engines, as the adjutants gallop in front of the cannon to discover the most promising positions.

Andrew, at the head of his staff, advanced boldly into the midst of the burning wreck, looking for the most dangerous points, and eagerly seeking guides, whom he could not find. Masses of men

and masses of flame swayed about with the most fearful force. Everything was in utter disorder. On one side, everyone was in command; on the other, no one; so that things went best when everyone did just as his instinct prompted him.

Andrew had wisely enjoined upon his company to keep together; but how was this to be done? The firemen, armed with crooks, aimed at taking out the teeth of their prey,—*i.e.*, the beams and joints, the most inflammable objects,—at the imminent risk of their lives. Those who had buckets posted themselves at the pump, relieved others already worn out, or organised chains of buckets, and from time to time filled up the gaps that occurred in them; while Andrew, as lantern-bearer, flew about among the ranks, giving orders and exhorting the men, calling the idle to account, choosing positions for the resolute, and suitable ones for the irresolute, and maintaining the continuity of the chain between the fire-engine and those who fed it. He realized now the difficulty of such a task in the thick of a persistent and spreading fire; a task far more difficult than that of controlling a regiment under a fire of artillery, or of keeping a hundred fleas shut up in the palm of one's hand! Of this chain, composed of men and boys from a hundred villages, one would take offence, and all of a sudden take himself off; another would perceive that his neighbour had

vanished, and he would set off suddenly in quest of him; next, a fire-engine would change its place, and when water was called for, no one would be at hand with a supply, the chain having lost half its length; or, another engine dashing through the crowd, would disperse the ranks right and left. In attempting to re-organise the chains, those who composed them would have to be hunted for in every direction. Perhaps at the moment when all were ready, and the cry of "Water, water!" resounded on every side, some one would exclaim, that this was after all not the worst place, but yonder; and a rush would take place in that direction, in spite of imploring cries to the contrary.

To Andrew this experience was new; for though he had assisted at fires many a time, he had never before had the command. His courage and zeal were unbounded: he seemed to have the wings of a bird and the valour of a lion; and his movements were so rapid that he was repeatedly reminded that no one could follow him. At first he had stimulated his followers amicably and with all due politeness, assuring them that when there were fresh relays they might be spared. But when he saw gaps perpetually recurring, and order perpetually broken, he changed his tone from request to command, and even resorted to physical force in some cases. He forgot himself so far at last as

to use violence and violent language; when, suddenly perceiving two girls standing talking together under a tree, he seized one of them by the arm, and was proceeding to force her into the chain, when her voice, as she rather indignantly remonstrated against such roughness, startled him, and looking her in the face he recognised the peasant girl from Dorngrüt. The surprise was mutual, and before it had evaporated they found themselves standing alone, and in a state of mental petrifaction. At this juncture a sudden rush to a tank (till then unthought of) compelled them to make way, and the next moment, when Andrew looked round for his companion, she was nowhere to be seen. All his thought now was for her, and the interests of the fire became quite secondary, till a voice shouted to him to restore order once again, and probably in another half-hour the fire would be got under. This roused him to a sense of his responsibility, for he had been on the point of decamping, like those he had only just now been so enraged with; and if he hurried about once more with the same speed, it was no more with the same zeal, nor, if the truth must be told, with the same aim, for his search was now for the well-known face of a young peasant girl, and not for renegades from the chain. In his haste he more than once stumbled over one of the abandoned

buckets lying idle on the ground, raising a laugh against him,—a laugh which would have been louder had the truth been known. But it was all in vain; not a trace of her was to be found, and he now wished a thousand times that he had remained where they first met. All at once the chain he happened to be leading suddenly dispersed without his having heard the signal given, and he found himself once more standing alone.

The thanksgiving sermon had been announced, and when this is the case, all need for discipline is understood to be over: the pastor, mounted on an inverted bucket, or on some stout fragment from the *débris*, raises his voice in fervent thanksgiving, first to God, and then to man, and the crowd centres closely round him. Andrew flattered himself that now he must certainly find her, and rushed to the spot; but though he had climbed upon a pile of wood, so as to get a full view of all the upturned faces, the one he sought so eagerly was not to be seen amongst them. Determined to leave no stone unturned, he wandered about for some time after the concluding prayer—of which, like the sermon, it is to be feared he had heard but little—his lantern, hooked to the end of a long pole, thrust into every shadowy corner before him; and when the signal horn sounded for all to assemble in their respective companies and return to their homes, Andrew would not have been conscious

of it but for a reminder from one of his comrades: he would have preferred to remain there for ever, if he had not at this moment bethought himself of the certificate.

"Bah!" replied his companion, "no need for that: all these broken buckets will bear witness to our having been at work."

"No," maintained Andrew; "I will get my certificate: there's no knowing who may carry back the buckets, and firemen are sometimes suspected of not having been present."

The majority differed with Andrew, because they were famishing with hunger and thirst, not having eaten since noon, and the little bread that had been obtainable in the village of Oberkirch had not sufficed for half their number. It was proposed, therefore, that they should all go together to the inn at the nearest village, and there get something to eat.

Andrew agreed, telling them to go on, and give the order if he didn't overtake them; but adding, "I shall not be long in getting the certificate."

"Au revoir," they all shouted, save one whom Andrew had asked to stay with him, as though with a presentiment of what might happen. He betook himself gaily to the village school-house, where the authorities were assembled, but with frequent digressions wherever he happened to see a knot of people; so that at last his comrade asked

him if he was on the look-out for a fight. "For," said he, "after a fire, when everyone's courage is up, it's not well to go poking about that way."

But, look about as he would, Andrew could nowhere discern the sweet young face that had shone out from among the crowd with such a transient brightness. She was neither at the school-house nor at the neighbouring inn, which he insisted upon entering in spite of the protestations of his companion, in the secret hope of finding her, though professedly to get a glass of wine.

It was a glorious night: the stars were bright and countless. The smouldering fire still threw its radiance around, and the few who now busied themselves amongst its embers resembled in their blackness some of the groups in Orcagna's well-known purgatorial representations. Beyond the village, innumerable roads traversed the vast oak forest in different directions, which at this moment resounded with the hubbub of the returning fire-engines, the laughter and noisy uproar of emancipated firemen, and the shrill cries of distress of the frightened forest birds.

The babel increased. If the Bernese are slow to be excited, they are not quick in calming down; and nothing arouses them more thoroughly than a fire, especially if they take the customary glass of wine, or half-glass of brandy before starting.

In this instance the excitement of the return home had reached quarrelling pitch: some little civility shown to one of the young girls of the company had been misunderstood, and resented on her behalf.

Andrew with his companion were walking composedly through the crowd, edging their way when the pressure made it difficult. Before them resounded blows, oaths, and the cries of women; and suddenly he seemed to recognise the voice that had replied to him when he had seized the young girl so vehemently by the arm, "Gently, gently; don't be so rough." This was enough to carry him instantly into the very thick of the uproar.

In vain his companion strove to keep him back, or to get him to put out his lantern; warning him that if he took part in the affray he might come off badly. Andrew soon found himself surrounded by disfigured and bloody faces, and not far, as he firmly believed, from the one he had been so long trying to find. His companion heroically followed him, ready to deal a blow for him in case of need. Suddenly a hissing sound was heard, followed by a blow from one of the fire-crooks on Andrew's devoted head, and he lay senseless on the ground.

"Brigand! assassin!" screamed out his companion—words which alarmed the combatants and sent them off on their way full speed; whereupon

Andrew's companion found himself alone with the stunned and bleeding youth.

"Just what I promised you," he exclaimed to himself; "and now, how on earth am I ever to get you home?" He drew him to the roadside, and tried to raise him; but to no purpose. He was beginning to despair, when some one emerged from the wood, questioned him as to how it had happened, and then pointing to the right, "There," said he, "there's a cottage within a stone's throw where they have a spring cart. I'll show you the way; they'll lend you the cart, and when you've got him into it you can overtake the others, and you'll be out of your difficulty."

The listener hesitated, not liking to leave his friend.

"Why," said the other, "are you afraid of his running away? I suppose you don't mean to let him lie here all night, bleeding to death! it would soon be all over with him."

"No! but if I wait here with him, help may come."

"I doubt it very much. I know we're quite the last; but as you please. Adieu!"

"Stop, stop," cried the other; "show me the way. I'll take your advice;" and they soon disappeared in the forest. Some time elapsed, when the silence of the forest was again broken by the noise of cart-wheels: two men were in it.

"Here," cried one of them, "here are the three oaks: he was leaning against the one in the middle."

They drew up, but there was no sign of Andrew. All was still; the startled birds had resumed their slumbers, but Andrew's dismayed companion could find no trace of him. True, there were marks of blood on the ground, and the grass showed that some one had been lying there; but nothing more. Andrew's companion groped about everywhere with his lantern, poking it into the very rabbit holes, and looking inquiringly up into the branches of the trees; and then ended by bitterly regretting that he had yielded. "Who knows," he added, "but what it was all planned? who knows but what he only led me away to your house that he might return and finish him off more securely? Tell me, do you know anything of the man that showed me the way?"

"Don't torment yourself," replied the owner of the cart: "if he had had any bad intention, he would have pointed out my house from a respectful distance, and not have come up to it to be recognised. Your man must have recovered and gone on; ten to one you'll find him at the nearest inn."

It is hard not to believe in pleasant predictions, especially when they wear some slight air of probability. So thanking the man, he set out in

pursuit. Arrived at the village he found the same hubbub, but that was all: the party from the fire were no longer at the inn, nor anywhere to be seen; and as to hearing anything of a wounded young man, with a bleeding head, some said "yes," some said "no;" others told him to be off about his business, for they had not time to listen to such tales. Bloody faces were no novelty after a fire.

He now found himself obliged to give up the search: he kept up his courage, however, but could not dismiss his anxiety.

"If I had only stayed by him! What use has the cart been after all? Could it have been Satan himself who tempted me to leave him? Now I think of it, he was no ordinary looking person."

Such were the reflections that chased one another through this man's mind on his way homeward. Once arrived there, he was very much tempted to say nothing about Andrew, and was on the point of sending back the lantern to the engine-station by one of the village children; but he thought better of it, for which of us, fortunately, does half the foolish things that enter into our heads? However, he soon learnt that no one had seen Andrew, and that they were awaiting the return of his companion to obtain news of him.

Accordingly, the man saw that the sooner he told his tale the better; but as often as he repeated

it he increased its confusion by trying to cover the fault his conscience reproached him with—that is, the fact of having left his friend at the advice of another; which really had not been a fault at all, but at the worst a want of reflection, and a very pardonable one after all the excitement of a fire and on an empty stomach. But the consequence was that each of his auditors in succession formed their own theories, which resembled each other, and resembled the facts of the case, about as much as a serpent resembles an elephant. Some were convinced that Andrew had been taken for dead, and buried in the forest; others, that he had set off on some courting expedition: some actually suspected the Devil in person; others, his comrade, who was known to have been long without a penny in his pocket, while Andrew's was always full.

His parents' anxiety may be imagined. Christian paced up and down outside the house, and his wife kept taking little turns up and down the road; both on the rack.

Hours passed by, increasing their anguish, and Christian was prepared to set off for the village, when a woman arrived, exclaiming,

"Ah! my poor friends, you may wait, and wait, but he'll never come back."

"Oh, God!" ejaculated Anna frantically; "what has happened?" while Christian started

from his post on the threshold, like a bird that sees some one touch its nest.

"I'm afraid to tell you," proceeded the woman; "this sort of news is heard soon enough. Adieu."

Anna had turned pale, and was now gasping for breath.

"Oh, merciful God," she again exclaimed, "what has happened to him?"

"Dear me," continued their informant, "if I'd thought you'd take fright this way, I wouldn't have told you; but I won't tell you any more. Adieu."

"Out with it, woman; will you speak or not?" exclaimed Christian, exasperated; "we're not people to be trifled with."

"Bless me, don't work yourself up into such a fume as this: if you won't frighten yourselves, nor me either, I'll tell you exactly what I heard in the village. Some say that Andrew's dead; some suspect that the Devil himself has carried him off: anyhow, he's not to be heard of. Adieu."

This time nobody heard the Adieu, for Anna had leaned her head against the palings, and was sobbing as though her heart would break.

"Come, come," exclaimed Christian, "this'll never do. Come inside that no one may hear you in passing by, and wonder what has happened. I'll go at once to the village and see what can be learnt; but it certainly is strange that he doesn't appear anywhere."

He attempted to lead Anna indoors, but she had fainted; and he had to give her water and restoratives before he could bring her round. Then the children, who were hoeing in the fields, had to be sent for, and it was not till they were all there, loud in their sorrow and lamentations, that he could get what was required.

Christian had not bestirred himself so for many a year. The neighbours were afraid, and crept out of his way.

"He's not even weeping," one of them remarked: "but I'll wager poor Anna's weeping bitterly. But such is life: man is crushed before the moth. Indeed, we might almost have predicted it; in a house where there was nothing but bickering and wrangling, God was sure to send some judgment or other."

These amiable comments were lost upon Christian. Seeing no one in the street, nor outside the houses, he steered straight for the inn, where the host explained to him, very rationally, that the case was not hopeless; that, after all, Andrew was only missing; but that Hans (Samuel's son) had seen him last. One would think he might be able to give some particulars of him, but he gave such a queer account, no one could make anything of it.

"He'll find I shall want to have it explicitly," remarked Christian, thanking him; and forthwith rushed to Samuel's.

He had some difficulty in getting any one to open the door, for there seemed to be no one about; but at last, perceiving the servant-girl in the dairy, he darted at her, and insisted that Hans should be produced immediately.

After being vigorously shaken, Hans proffered a statement substantially true (only touching up the passage relative to his quitting Andrew's side), and represented that this had evidently been a design. He did not believe that Andrew was dead, but he could not imagine what had become of him.

"As to that, we must go and see. You shall come with me, and show me where you left him."

"Not just yet, pray; I'm quite too tired. I've had no sleep all night."

"Tired! I'm going to get a cart, and in one hour's time I shall expect to see you ready at the gate."

Hans made no further resistance, seeing that Christian was only determined, not vindictive. No one was more anxious than he was, he remarked, to know what had become of Andrew; not only for his sake, but for his own, to prove that he had not left him to die like a footpad.

Christian on his return home found himself in a strange way. His legs trembled under him; more than once a black cloud had seemed to come across his eyes, and he had had to hold on by the hedges. He had a good hope that

things were not so bad as report would say, and from time to time his eyes filled with tears as he realized that he was carrying home more hopeful tidings than might have been feared; but this very circumstance relaxed in some degree the strain he had been under, and a general torpor supervened. He was longer reaching his house than he had calculated, and with much difficulty, and found the rest of the family assembled in the lane in agonised expectation.

"Oh, husband!" was Anna's exclamation, "what a face you have! I know now that he's dead. Oh! Andrew, Andrew, to think that I shall never see you again!" and the waves of desolation began to break over her soul.

"Stay, Anna; don't give him up that way," broke in Christian; "the chances are that he isn't dead. Who knows but what he may have come to himself after they had left him, and gone to——to where he's waiting for us now? The thing is, how to find him. Felix, give Bruno a feed of corn, and put him to while I go and dress."

At this point he seated himself on his accustomed bench, and called for a glass of water—another alarm for those around him, who began afresh to implore him to tell them the whole truth, saying it would be no harder to bear now than later; indeed, rather the reverse.

"Gently, gently," he remonstrated; "pray calm yourselves; it really is not so bad as all that, only the excitement has quite upset me. Perhaps I've walked too fast. Annette, go and put out a clean shirt for me, I shall come in and dress in a minute."

"No, no, indeed you mustn't; Felix will go instead. You're not well, and Bruno's too fresh; there's no knowing what might happen; and think what I should feel while you're away."

"But Hans is coming with me."

"What of that? If you were taken ill he would be of no use. Indeed, what you ought to do, is to go to bed: you might catch your death of cold, driving in the state you're in. No, you must keep quiet; and if you're not better I shall send for the doctor: you'll be all right after he's bled you."

There was no help for it; Christian had to give up the enterprise to Felix, and the little cares and attentions he needed were a vent for Anna's oppressed heart, diverting her momentarily from the missing one. True women are always most absorbed in those who are within the reach of their ministry: they could not neglect them in order to sit and lament over the absent. Christian had to yield and go to bed, and take a bowl of soup; while Anna sat by fanning away the flies with her hand. Annette meanwhile hovered about the house

outside, straining eyes and ears for some portent. If Christian happened to dose for a few moments, Anna would join her, followed by Christian himself on waking (for care is not conducive to sleep); but look and listen as they would, nothing appeared.

"Ah! who would have thought it!" exclaimed Anna. "How little we think what may happen to us! Only yesterday we were all so happy together, and now our boy is lost, the boy we loved so well, and we can only weep for him. Yes, we should love truly while we are spared to each other, for we never know how soon we may be parted."

In a spacious clearing of a noble forest stands a large grey house, the back of which appears quite new. At the side of it is built a wood-house, a stable, and a wing with small windows which the roof seems to press down upon—like an evil-looking man's hat, crushed down close to his eyes, that passers-by may not see into them. Traces of carpentering lie about the house, with brooms and pails here and there. Pigs, ducks, and hens roam about at liberty; and in the open granary, a little, hard-featured man, with small eyes and a large nose, is visible, busily twisting hay-bands for the harvest. Near the granary stands the house door, leading to the kitchen by a passage blackened with smoke; and from this passage emerges a young girl, free from any trace of smoke, radiant with grace

and cleanliness, and her beautiful thick hair exquisitely dressed.

"Father, we really must have the doctor. He hasn't come to himself yet. Do come and look at him, and see what you think."

"What I've thought all along," grumbled the man; "you should have left him where he was. What had you to do with him? and what need had you to bring such a burden upon us?"

"But, father, he might have died."

"And what if he had? He must die some time and perhaps better soon than late."

"Ah! but think how we should have reproached ourselves if we had left him there."

"Bah! ill weeds don't die so easily. Very likely his companions have been to look for him; and think what a fuss there may be about his having disappeared!"

"Well, never mind, father; what is done is done. It'll do no good to argue. Come up and see him, and then tell me what you think. We've bandaged his head with cloths dipped in wine. Mother's thinking of trying cold water bandages next; and if that doesn't answer, she doesn't know what to do."

"Yes, there it is," replied the father, giving a final twist to one of the hay-bands, and then throwing it on the top of the others. "Our time isn't enough for our own work, and so we must needs

go and waste it upon other people. Once for all, when you see a man on the ground another time, let him alone. Is it our fault that he's in that plight, or is it not?"

Muttering further reflections of the same kind, he proceeded to follow his daughter over the high door-step and along the smoky passage, in which all sorts of implements were hung on the walls or standing against them; and he was still grumbling when the young girl opened the door of a bed-room.

"And pray, why did you bring him here, into the best bed in the house? People that are picked up in a wood should be laid in the stable, on straw, and not on a feather bed."

"But, father, he's not of the class that sleep on straw."

"Then he should have gone home and slept where he pleased."

"H—sh! h—sh!" whispered a tall gaunt woman from behind the blue curtain where she was sitting. "He's coming round."

The girl went gently and stood behind her mother, while the man stood at the foot of the bed gazing at the pale youth who lay there, his eyes shut, his head swathed, and one hand moving restlessly about, as though in quest of something it could not find.

"He doesn't want the doctor," exclaimed the man; "he'll soon be awake. What sort of stuff

must a man be made of to fall down and lose his senses for a mere blow?"

At this moment the patient slowly opened his eyes and looked round with difficulty, and then closed them again. Then, as though something particular had aroused him mentally, he started up in a sitting posture, inquiring anxiously:

"Where am I? what has happened?"

"And where else would you be?" responded the woman.

"But how did I get here?"

"Come, daughter, tell him all about it," she resumed; and as she turned sideways, suddenly, and without any intermediate object, Marian, the peasant-girl of Dorngrüt, appeared to Andrew's astonished gaze; so that, heavy as his eyelids still were, they did not close again; and his heart beat violently. Marian meanwhile looked and felt embarrassed.

"Come, Marian, tell him; and in the mean time I'll go back to my work."

"Ah! it's a good thing you've woke up," said the father: "now the doctor won't be wanted; and you'll be all right soon. As soon as I've finished my hay-bands, I'll come again and see whether you can get up."

So father and mother left the room, without a suspicion of what was passing in these two young hearts.

Marian had not forgotten her partner; she had never ceased to look out for him from that day until now. She had sometimes started up from her sleep when the wind rattled at her window, to look out and see if it could be him. Do what she would she could not forget him; nay, she felt that if she should pass out of time without seeing him, she would recognise him in eternity. The more deeply his image became engraved on her heart, the more sombre seemed her surroundings, and the destiny that awaited her: also the more carefully did she avoid letting her parents know what was passing in her heart, as they would have thought her mad, to care for anyone whose very name she didn't know: still more, of whose means she was in total ignorance. So she kept her own counsel, every day asking herself, "Has he forgotten me? Shall I ever meet him again?" And then, from time to time, in the midst of these meditations about her hero, a grim form would rise up all at once before her mind's eye—that of an old man of seventy, with scanty grey hair, red eyes, and a nose tinged with snuff—at the vision of whom her whole soul cowered within her, and her whole heart would exclaim, "Oh! no! no! I would rather die than accept him."

Dorngrüt is about an hour's walk from Oberkirch. When the volumes of smoke there had proclaimed

the extent of the fire, no one capable of moving arms or legs had failed to turn out of their houses, according to the old and honourable custom. The farmers' daughters had set off with the women servants, the sons with the men, and not a few old grandfathers and grandmothers had tried to hobble after them, each carrying a pail or a bucket, of which there can never be too many at a fire. At Dorngrüt every one had set out, saving only the father and mother; and Marian had worked valiantly; but at the last she had found herself separated from her party, and was about to look out for them, when, just at the moment when she was thinking least of him, Andrew appeared, and an instant after vanished. Twice she had tried to slip away from the chain she was assisting in, to try and find him, but twice she had been ordered back to her place. The signal for the thanksgiving sermon had liberated her, but not having succeeded in getting inside the crowd, she had seen no one. It was indispensable then that she should find her own people, for the forest was no fit place for a young girl to be alone in after dark.

There was no end to the recital of exploits as the party wended its way home. One asserted that but for *him* the Parsonage would have been burnt down; another, that *he* had saved the life of a woman and a child; a third, that without *his* fire-engine not a soul in the whole village would have

escaped: but all this was suddenly interrupted by the voice of a girl who had wandered a few paces out of the road, and who exclaimed that there was a man there lying dead. The phalanx stopped; the boys called for lanterns, while the girls, uttering piteous lamentations, timidly ventured to obtain a glimpse at the prostrate body. There, under an oak tree, lay a tall young man, pale and bleeding; the grass the whole way to the road stained with his blood.

Marian, amongst others, had penetrated into the circle lit up by the lanterns, and there she had beheld him whose image was enshrined in her heart, him whom she had found and lost again, lying apparently lifeless. She neither screamed, sobbed, nor fainted, but she felt as though an iron hand had clutched her whole life, and was squeezing it to death.

She heard some one say that he was not dead; that he was still warm, and his heart still beating.

"Let us be off then, before he comes to himself," cried the driver of the fire-engine, "or we may get into trouble."

The circle immediately broke, the young men again mounted, and the fireman was on the point of giving the word of command to his horses, when Marian interposed.

"You are surely not going to leave the man in this condition! we should have to answer for it one day before God!"

"Nonsense," put in another; "he'll manage to get out of it as he got in: we've nothing to do with it."

"As to his getting out of it," remonstrated Marian, "I see no chance of that; he is the son of a respectable farmer over yonder: I've met him before. If we abandon him this way, it'll be a disgrace to the neighbourhood, and we shall get such a name, that if a fire happen in our village, everyone will leave us to manage as best we can. We must not behave like cut-throats."

This was not the first time that Marian had laid down the law this way, nor the first time that she had been listened to. There was a general pause for deliberation, during which she ordered one of her father's farm-servants to go home instantly by the shortest way, and fetch a horse and cart with some straw in it. In the mean time, Andrew was lifted on the seat of the fire-engine, between two men, who supported him.

"And where is he to go to," they inquired, "since no one knows his name?"

"That need be no difficulty," exclaimed Marian; "he's not the first stranger that's been taken to our house."

Marian's two brothers attempted to oppose this, but they were defeated.

Thus Andrew's arrival came about. The father had demurred, but his wife had maintained that

a wounded beggar had never been turned away from their doors; and that it would never do to refuse a refuge to the son of a farmer, and a well-to-do farmer moreover, as might be seen by the shirt he wore.

And thus it was that Andrew was admitted and carried into the best bed-room—to wit, that of Marian, who now for the first time seemed to breathe freely.

The old people having left the room, Andrew took her hand and humbly asked her if she had forgiven him for his rudeness at Oberkirch.

"Certainly; or rather, I didn't take offence: those who are disposed to take offence should never go to a fire."

"But for that unlucky fire-engine that came galloping by the instant after I had spoken to you, I should have begged your pardon at once; but though I afterwards sought you everywhere, I could not find you. But how did I get here?"

Then Marian related the occurrence, but without acknowledging the chief part she had played in it. (It was always *they* said, or *they* thought, or *they* believed.)

Andrew thereupon explained how it had happened that he was found under the oak-tree, and how it was that he was there alone. He was able now to speak rather more connectedly, and assured Marian that he had always longed to meet her again; and that he hadn't recognised her at the

fire, or he certainly would not have spoken to her as he did: besides that, that sort of language was not his way, only things had been getting into such confusion that he was exasperated. And then the next thing he distinctly remembered was a blow, and falling to the ground, and feeling as though he were sinking deeper and deeper into it; and then everything became dark, till at last he knew nothing more. By-and-by he seemed to hear voices, and he managed to open his eyes, but could scarcely see her standing beside her mother; but soon after he beheld her clearly, standing beside him—the young girl he had been looking for so long. It was her presence, he felt sure, that had opened his eyes, and that had brought him back to consciousness.

"Then you did recognise me?"

"That indeed I did; I should have recognised you amongst a thousand people: but did you recognise me?"

"I thought it was you; but at first I didn't feel very sure; and now, do you know where you are?"

"I fancy I must be at Dorngrüt."

"Why there?"

"Why, aren't you from Dorngrüt?"

"Who told you that?"

"The girl at the inn."

"What inn? The inn where we first met and danced?"

"Well!—and you have known all this time who I was, and never once took the trouble to come and see me; not even to ask how I got home that day! And yet you pretend you have been thinking of me!"

"Now you mustn't take it ill; I've been wishing to come a hundred times; but you never said anything at parting, and besides——"

"Where there's a will there's a way; but perhaps you're not free to go out without your master's leave."

At these words Andrew winced a little, but seeing an ironical expression on Marian's lips, he checked himself.

"Don't vex me, you must know who I am."

"And pray how should I know? I suppose you don't carry your name marked on your forehead, any more than anyone else."

"And have you had no curiosity to find out?"

"No more than you have had to hear how I got home that day. Besides, whom should I have asked? My father, or our horse? But, joking apart, tell me really who you are."

At this point Andrew began to give a detailed account of himself: there was no need for boasting, for the family at Liebwyl farm were known by repute far and wide; just as much so as any family of distinction is known amongst its own aristocracy. He said nothing of their wealth in

land or cattle, and boasted only of his parents, his brother, and sister, and of their goodness and kindness to him, and their happiness all together. The thought of their last evening together brought the tears to his eyes and his heart into his mouth; while Marian sat before him as gravely and demurely as she would have sat before her pastor, but with her heart beating, and the tears starting into her eyes also.

Just then her mother entered, carrying in one hand a coffee-pot and in the other an omelette on a plate, and saying she had brought him some refreshment, and that she wanted to see if he could take it.

A great deal has been said about exorcising spirits and apparitions, and in old times the Capuchins were said to have a great gift this way; but I believe no one has ever discussed the power of banishing the heart from the lips and the soul from the eyes, and sending them deep down into the most distant recesses, and shutting them up under lock and key: yet there are numbers of people who have this faculty to a singular degree, and are quite unconscious of it. I have known many fathers and mothers who have it, and yet declaim loudly against this locking up of heart and soul. Strange, how some people ignore their own influence! and strange, perhaps, that human hearts are so like mice and marmots, venturing out only

when not a breath blows, and when the sun has begun to shine.

These two young people suddenly became silent; their hearts retreated; and Andrew now begged the good woman not to take all this trouble about him, as he really could not take anything, and must be thinking of going.

"Do you know who he is?" Marian asked her mother; "he's the son of the farmer of Liebwyl; you know who I mean—the family we've so often heard of, and that the beggars are always quoting."

"Indeed!" exclaimed her mother. "Really! But now, why should you be in such a hurry to go? You really must eat something before you can think of it. Daughter, take this and give it him; I've left my pan on the fire, with the pigs' food boiling: the same fire serves for both."

This last remark was to appease her husband, who was within hearing, and had not ceased to inveigh against the folly of taking in strangers without knowing who or what they may be.

When he learnt who Andrew was, he remarked, "If it's true, he's of a good family; but it's no uncommon thing for people to give themselves out for what they are not. So that the sooner he sets off the better. Think what old Keller would say; you know how suspicious he is."

Meanwhile Marian was waiting upon the invalid;

and began to feel a little more at her ease when she found she could do a few little things for him, such as holding the cup while he drank out of the saucer. Andrew deprecated all this as much as possible; but all was done with such a skill and grace and delicacy, that it quite gave him an appetite, in spite of the difficulty he had at first in swallowing; in fact, it seemed to him that nothing he had ever tasted in his life had been so good, and that while he was waited on in this way, he could go on eating and drinking for ever.

Marian's father being now in the room, her mother very soon returned, and proposed to her husband to take a cup of coffee; but he was taciturn, and all ease and familiarity had vanished. He neither inquired as to how many cows Andrew's parents had, nor whether they made cheese, nor how much milk they got; so that Andrew became more and more impatient to be amongst his own people again, and began to feel miserable at the thought of their anxiety on his account, and of all the false reports that would be afloat respecting him.

"Nonsense," Marian exclaimed, half in jest; "a young man's absence from home is nothing to alarm his parents." Here her mother took up the key, remarking, "that she seldom knew where her sons were."

But Andrew replied, that so far from that being

the practice at his home, he had never been absent for an hour without letting his mother know where he was, nor had he ever once been missing at breakfast.

She began hereupon to wish that all young men were like him, and especially her own boys; but her husband interrupted her by remarking to Andrew,

"Now, if I thought you were equal to it, I'd drive you part of the way home, so that you might get there to-day."

"Oh! father!" exclaimed Marian, "he's only just recovered consciousness. His head's quite on fire; just feel how hot it is!"

And so saying she laid her own hand upon his forehead. As to his being hot or cold, Andrew knew nothing; but he believed that no bandage had ever done him half so much good as that: if only it might remain there, he would have strength to travel any distance.

"It would be much better to send some one," she continued. "I'll go and see who there is that can go: there are lots of people who would go as far again for half a franc."

"But if he's so anxious to go home, why should we hinder him?" replied her father, who had no curiosity to feel how hot the wounded head was; "he surely must know best what he can bear."

Marian looked unutterable things, and left the room.

All this had convinced Andrew that he was in the way, and this was more than his pride could bear.

"I've quite enough to thank you for already," he replied; "I won't give you any further trouble. I dare say I shall be quite able to get to the next village, if I can't get on any further; and with fair words and a full purse I can always get a horse."

"Just as you please," was the answer. "By-the-by, if you'd like a certificate as to how you came here, you've only to say so. No doubt you know who it was that gave you the blow, and mean to prosecute."

"Nothing of the kind," answered Andrew. "I'm sure of nothing; and even if I were, I should not prosecute. A blow is always more or less an accident, and the money I should get as compensation would never be worth all the time and trouble."

"Everyone to his liking," was the old man's rejoinder. "When I've been wronged I assert my rights, if it costs me my head or my last farthing."

Andrew made no further remark. He refrained from saying that he objected to going to law: and slipping off from the side of the bed, giddy and tottering, he prepared to return home.

At this moment Marian hurriedly entered the

room to announce two people who had just driven up, and who were inquiring for him. "So that now," she continued, "you must really stay where you are, as you can send word home by them."

"And why shouldn't he go home with them," inquired her father, "if he wishes it? If he feels he's able for it, it's no responsibility of ours."

However, his wife had brought Felix into the room, who manifested a sincere delight at finding Andrew tolerably well, and at Dorngrüt of all places. "How odd that it should happen so!"

"Why so? what is there odd in his being at Dorngrüt, any more than any one else?" inquired one of the party; at which Felix looked embarrassed, and at a significant look from Andrew said nothing further. Marian's curiosity was excited; but Andrew, seeing the old man's face clouding, and fearful of losing his chance by too much precipitancy—which, though it may answer with the principal party concerned, is seldom propitious with fathers—answered adroitly:

"Last year we sold the wood of a little plantation in the middle of our land, which we had cut down because we found the shade of it injured the field; and we happened to hear that most of it had come here."

Felix looked a little surprised; but coughed, and said nothing. The old man took up the

subject, and began to calculate the profit of the transaction; coming to the conclusion that these were just the people to deal with; and remarking, that in general it was much better to go and buy wood one's self on the spot.

"True," answered Andrew, "and if ever you should want any again, you've only to come to us; we'll suit you if we can. Moreover, we shouldn't mind sending you a cartload or two; we can well afford it, and we should feel it only due if you made a large purchase."

Andrew evidently had his wits about him; so also had the old man: but avoiding any appearance of eagerness, he replied, "that for the present they were well off for wood, but they might bear it in mind for another time."

During this conversation the wife had brought out a bottle of spirits, some cheese, and a loaf of bread, of which the two men were compelled to partake before again starting. Hans repeated all the events of the previous night; how Andrew had seemed really on the lookout for a quarrel, hunting about everywhere, and thrusting himself into every little knot of people. He was surprised at this, because he knew it was not his custom. Felix then took up the strain, and related how he had happened first to hear that there was a stranger at Dorngrüt, and afterwards his name; and that though he had arrived there insensible, he had come to himself

again. He further added what his own feelings had been on hearing this.

Andrew listened with only one ear, for he was pre-occupied in planning how he could say a word or two to Marian before leaving, but there was no opportunity for it. Her brothers had arrived, and the room being full of attentive eyes and ears, Andrew urged their starting.

Everyone was ready; but Marian, bethinking herself that the bandages must certainly be renewed, begged the others not to wait, as she would not be a minute about it. But no one moved, not even Felix, who remarked that everything was ready outside, and that when Bruno was once brought to the door he never liked to stand.

So the bandages were redipped and replaced, but slowly, and in the presence of everyone; and then the move was made. Andrew walked out feebly, thanking everyone on his way, and hoping he would have the pleasure of seeing them at Liebwyl, and again thanking them, protesting that but for them he could hardly have lived through it. The old man fidgeted and made for the door, as it was always his custom to see his guests pass through before him. But they were hardly outside the house, when Andrew, feeling in his pocket, discovered that he had left his pocket-handkerchief behind him, and signified that he must go back for it.

"Oh, let Marian go," exclaimed the mother; and Marian was soon in the smoky passage, but followed by Andrew.

He was sure she could not find it, so he followed her into the room, and in another instant he was out again with his handkerchief in his hand. This time, however, Marian did not cross the threshold: whether she betook herself to some window upstairs and watched Andrew till he was out of sight, is more than we can say.

Andrew wondered—when he could think of anything but the pain in his head caused by the jolting of the cart—whether it was always so with strangers at other people's houses, or whether these people had any objection to him in particular. They stopped at the first inn they came to, from which point he charged Felix to go alone full speed to Liebwyl, so as to put an end to his parents' suspense.

It would be impossible to describe the joy and relief that his return occasioned, or the gratitude Anna felt and expressed to the merciful Providence that had watched over her son; or her amazement at the inhospitable spirit of his host at Dorngrüt; or her impatience to know whether Andrew's interests there had made any progress. As to this, however, Felix knew nothing. All he could tell was, that it had been Marian's doing that Andrew had been taken there instead of being left

to die; and that that looked well. But Anna thought he must surely have remarked how the young girl herself behaved, whether the mother had seemed well disposed, and whether Andrew had spoken his mind to Marian herself or not. The more this appeared doubtful, the more Anna seemed annoyed, not only with the people of Dorngrüt, but with her sons themselves, who had acted like "pure simpletons."

"Well, I know now who to send if I want a business managed badly. If I had had an idea where Andrew was, I should have gone there instantly myself, and you wouldn't have found me come back with nothing more to tell. Andrew should have been installed in their best parlour, which may be ever so smart for all we know; not that I think so much as some people of a room kept all for show and not for use; where, moreover, the furniture's often all tumbling to pieces, and not half so comfortable as our plain chairs and tables. Plain, and whole, and clean is my maxim."

Anna was thoroughly vexed; and if she had had her own way, she would have set off immediately to see after Andrew and his love affair; she could not bear to think of his being left alone.

"Mother, if you like I'll go at once," proposed Annette; "I can nurse Andrew well enough, and as to the other matter, perhaps a young girl like

me might be able to get to know more than you could, without attracting attention: mothers are always suspected."

"No, no; you've not learnt to manage your own business yet, and you'd certainly spoil other people's. No, I must go myself and see what can be done."

Anna was quite in a fever till the arrival of her husband, who gently reminded her that no good could come of growing impatient and irritable; insisting that for that day it was too late, and that they must not think of setting out till the morrow.

Anna coloured, and a hasty answer would have escaped her, but a glance at Christian's happy, affectionate face, disarmed her. She took his hand, and answering, "yes, you're right," proposed that they should go in and read a chapter together.

It was not easy for Anna to sleep that night; her heart was in a perpetual tumult. Wave after wave swept over it. And does this ever end, till the end of life itself? It is only then that the feeling heart finds rest.

Anna had not seen any of her children married yet; and what mother does not dream of seeing at least one safely anchored in the port of marriage before her own eyes are closed in death?

Andrew was her favourite, if she had one; and his happiness seemed threatened by the prejudices

of narrow-minded parents. How could she combat these? She had a good hope that a little of her management might accomplish much.

This time it was not the sun that awoke Anna. She rose before it, and busied herself in collecting sundry articles of bedding, which would ease the journey for Andrew. The opening and shutting of so many doors aroused the rest of the household, everyone fancing they had overslept themselves; but they soon found how it was.

Felix went to the stable, and Anna to the kitchen; Christian alone stayed in bed, trying to sleep on; but Anna presently roused him, appearing with his Sunday clothes over her arm.

"Here, father, if I were you I'd get up now, and then you won't have to hurry; and you'll be ready at any rate when we are."

"Must I go, think you?"

"Certainly; who else should?"

"Oh! I thought you and Annette were going. What time is it?"

"Half-past three. But what good in the world could Annette do—especially with Dragon—if anything happened?"

"Then why shouldn't you take the old horse? He's as quiet as a lamb."

"Oh! he was out yesterday; and I don't like to overdrive a horse when it can possibly be avoided."

Anna had secretly set her heart upon their driving Dragon, because he was a superb creature, and invariably noticed by passers-by. She gave orders to the servant that the harness should be polished extra well, and the horse well groomed, not a speck of dust left upon him, as that was a condition Andrew liked to see. Then she proceeded to dust and brush the cushions of the cart; and when at last she appeared at breakfast, Annette laughingly asked:

"Why, mother, are you going to a wedding? You're so fine one's afraid to look at you."

Christian appeared soon afterwards, equally spruce; on which Annette inquired seriously what it all meant.

The good couple were truly "a sight for sair een." Christian, in his clean corduroy with resplendent buttons, and Anna in the fine dark cloth that served so well to set off all its accessories. Their bright black leather shoes and dazzlingly white linen (so fine that few eyes could count its threads) were alike.

"What do you mean, Annette?" she answered; "Do you think you're the only one that's ever to be smart? You forget that when a marriage is in question, a great deal is thought of the parents; and it's well we should let it be seen who and what we are. Andrew may have talked of us ever so finely, and yet if they should see us arrive looking

poverty stricken, it wouldn't have a very good effect. Besides, I should like to show these people that though they couldn't afford to prolong their hospitality to a wounded stranger, we can well afford to pay for it."

"Are you going to Dorngrüt then?" inquired Annette: "if you are, be sure you remember what I said on Sunday evening."

"That depends upon how Andrew's affair actually stands. Father, have you plenty of money in your pocket?"

"I think so," he answered, slowly drawing from his trousers'-pocket a handful of silver, amongst which several five-franc pieces were conspicuous.

"And is that what you call sufficient? Here, take the key and fill your purse from the drawer. If it's not convenient in that pocket, put it into your waistcoat; it'll be seen more there, whether you take it out or not. And bring a handful for me. One never knows what may happen, especially in a strange place. Think of setting out with just a handful of silver, and to such a distance! When I was young, no one ever set out from our house, with the plough even, without at least a hundred francs in his pocket. True, in those days there were a few well-to-do people; but really they are hardly to be met with now."

At last all were ready, and Christian had lighted his pipe. Two farm-servants held Dragon by the

reins, for he capered and snorted so as to frighten Anna. Annette appealed to her mother for final instructions as to how much of the butter was to be sold if the butterman came. Felix reminded them above all not to let him stand in the way if good terms could be made for Andrew; and now—"Hue!" shouted Christian, "à la garde de Dieu;" and off bounded Dragon, starting one man on the right side and the other on the left. Annette uttered a timid shriek, and then another when she saw the cart whisk round the corner, barely clearing the post, and everyone ran into the lane to see what would follow. All went perfectly: Christian once settled into his seat, even Dragon might prance and wince as he liked, he must trot as Christian pleased.

"Dear! who's this coming up in such style? Judging by appearances, and especially by the horse, it must be some one that's well off," said a stout, middle-aged man who, with a tall young man, stood outside an inn, both with their hands in their pockets.

The young man, without making any reply, went forward to meet the vehicle so rapidly approaching, and while the horse began to neigh and toss its head, a fine looking woman cried out:

"See! it's him. Thank God! Andrew"——

"Andrew, take the reins," added the man; "it's

no joke to hold in a horse like this. Ugh! my arm's as stiff and sore as possible!"

"Why didn't you bring the mare, father? She wouldn't have pulled so!"

"Oh! it was your mother's whim," he answered, slowly descending by a step not very conveniently placed. After this he lifted his wife down with a vigorous effort, she being quite unable to adopt the same method of descent as her husband.

It was not till then that the interrogation began, and the expressions of astonishment as to Andrew's recovery; then followed remarks on Andrew's side, as to the imposing appearance of his parents. The hostess was on the spot almost immediately, making abundant excuses for her untidy dress, in which she said she really could hardly show herself, and escorted the good people into the parlour, while Andrew led Dragon into the stable to the accompaniment of reiterated neighings and noddings of the head. The hostess soon related how she had tended Andrew, and also what a fine young man he was, such as she had scarcely ever seen before; whereupon Anna found it impossible to refrain from a few severe remarks upon the farmer of Dorngrüt, who had been in such a hurry to get rid of him; and stated her project of going there to pay them for their trouble, by way of teaching them a lesson.

The hostess considered it an excellent idea, and declared she would like to see them put to the blush for once, as they were the most disagreeable, supercilious people imaginable, and gave themselves no end of airs.

They had only one daughter left at home, and she was of a different stamp. She was kind to the poor; and knew how to behave to her equals. How she could be her mother's daughter was a mystery; for sweet pears are not generally found on sour apple trees. Anyhow she was a good girl, and the hostess would like to see her well married. She could not understand how they could have the heart to throw her away upon such an old scapegrace! literally selling her for money.

"How? is she going to be married?" inquired Anna. "Do you hear, Andrew?"

"It's not quite certain yet," continued the hostess; "but it's just one of those everyday cases. The parents want to use their daughter as a basket to heap up fortune in. This old man is utterly worthless, and he has had three wives already; but he's horribly rich. His temper's fearful; he has a number of poor relations, to whom his fortune might do so much good, and who, in the hope of inheriting it, work for him for next to nothing; but they none of them can hold on long. He entices them by talking of his will, and makes this do instead of wages; and when they

leave he says the most infamous things about them. Some of the village people say they wonder he's allowed to live, and they imagine the devil is only waiting till he is married again, as he would be sure to make his wife as wicked as himself, and then there would be two ruined instead of one.

"But now, instead of looking out for some poor person, who would at least be glad of his money, and might console herself with that, he's actually aiming at the nicest and richest young girl in the parish. At first Marian laughed at the idea, but when she found out that her parents really were bent upon it, and intended to make her submit, she refused ever to speak to him again. But she'll not escape, I'll warrant."

"But why should her parents wish it? Wouldn't a good young man that was well off do as well?"

"Not a bit of it! They want her soon to be left a rich widow. The thing would have been arranged long ago, in spite of the poor girl, only that the old people couldn't agree about the settlement. Old Keller maintains that no settlement is necessary, as, when he dies, his wife will have everything. But Marian's father says one never can tell that she would survive him, though she is thirty years his junior: and if it should so happen, they would be no better off for it. Besides that, an old man like him shouldn't expect to get a rich young wife for nothing. But he won't have his hands tied;

and as he has survived three wives, I suppose he thinks he may outlive a fourth, or even a fifth!"

The more the hostess gossiped, the more bewildered and anxious Anna became. She asked how far they were from Dorngrüt, and which was the way there. She must have a glimpse of these people at least! Could they be really human beings, or had they horns! But Andrew objected. He knew his mother's outspoken impetuosity: he knew she never could hide what she felt, and he foresaw the possible consequences; and if once hostilities were declared, it would be all over with him. He was too deferential to say all this, but he vehemently urged prudence and patience, and tried hard to dissuade his mother from the project, reminding her that the journey home was a long one of itself; that he wanted to get back; that he had already thanked the people at Dorngrüt quite sufficiently, and that they would not like to be interrupted again in their harvest-work. Naturally and by instinct the father sided with his son; but Anna was more obstinate than usual on this occasion: however the hostess opined that there could be no harm in just taking a look at Dorngrüt and its inhabitants; and proposed that while they were about it, she should be preparing the dinner, so that it should be ready by their return. At this point Andrew,

looking serious, begged his mother to step outside with him, as he wanted a word with her.

"How happy you are to have such a son as that!" exclaimed the hostess to Christian when left alone with him. "Only see to it that he gets a good wife."

"That's not so easy now-a-days," replied Christian; "and sometimes when you think you've found one, just at the last everything goes wrong."

"True! but let me just ask, have you ever thought of the peasant girl at Dorngrüt for him?"

"It has been thought of; but now it seems hardly likely to come to anything. They've just met, and they've danced together, and I believe my boy was very much pleased with the girl; but that's all, for he sees very clearly that there would be nothing but trouble if he were to attempt it; so that neither he nor I are disposed to make any further advances."

"Well, that does seem rather a pity; the girl is really worth some trouble, especially as I should fancy you wouldn't take up with any that was not of the right sort. So, if I can do you a good turn in the matter, I would help you with all the pleasure in the world; especially as it would balk that infamous old man."

Here Andrew returned with his mother, who had resigned herself to not going to Dorngrüt, though it had cost her a great struggle. After all

the expense, and trouble, and the fright Dragon had given her—all for nothing! However, there was one consolation—they had been seen, and remarked upon; and what some had seen so near Dorngrüt, would certainly be retailed there.

As a good and pious mother, there was nothing Anna would not have sacrificed, short of her hopes of Heaven, to further her son's happiness. She had on this occasion gone out of her way to make "an appearance"—a sort of thing she instinctively detested. What mother will not, like an old hen, exert herself beak and wing if she sees one of her young ones threatened? but the solicitude of the hen lasts only a few weeks; while that of a mother lasts till she sleeps the Sleep of Death. Are we sure that they end even then?

Wishing to give the affair all possible publicity, Anna went to the village grocer's. "I so very seldom go out for a day," she remarked, "that when I do I like to take something home for those that have stayed behind; and I'm curious to know the price of coffee here."

Now at the principal village shop, even more than at the village inn, women open not only their mouths, but their hearts to each other; it is often the scene of discussions quite as exciting as parliamentary debates, and which, though they may not be transcribed like the latter, don't the less go from house to house.

Anna found here all that she had wished. There were no other customers present, so that she could buy and chat at her ease. She seemed in no hurry about it, nor the grocer either; and finally she had made a heap of purchases which she could hardly have carried back to the inn without help. All was done with perfect simplicity, only it immensely excited the curiosity of the grocer to know who her customer was. The inherent distinction in Anna had impressed her: she absolutely insisted that the parcels should be sent to the inn; indeed, she then promised, with a secret determination to get all the information she desired out of the hostess, to carry them there herself as soon as she had put her potatoes on to boil.

The ample dinner at the inn had just concluded; the host was seated by Christian, discussing black cattle with him, and his wife was clearing the table, when Anna suggested that it was time to go, and asked Andrew to see if the horse was fit to start again; adding, "we must rest and refresh our animals as we do ourselves."

"I think he's all right," answered Andrew; "but I'll go and see."

Just as he went out of the house, who should appear but the farmer's wife from Dorngrüt. There was no help for it; he must of necessity go and shake hands with her, and confess to being still there.

"You here!" she exclaimed, trying to look anxious; "what's the matter! and why didn't you come back to us if you couldn't bear the motion of the cart? Really this is vexatious: people will think we can't afford to keep a guest more than two days. If I'd foreseen this, nothing should have induced me to let you go. It is well I happened to come into the village, for now you can come back with me if it's not too far for you. If I'd known I'd have brought the cart."

Andrew paid no attention to all these "ifs." He had just then perceived the cunning face of the grocer at her window; so that he abstained from trying to find out whether the speaker had been led to the village by curiosity to see his parents, or whether any one at Dorngrüt really regretted him: anyhow, he behaved with the politeness a well-bred youth would naturally wish to evince to a possible mother-in-law.

"Look, look quick!" exclaimed the hostess at the inn, to her guests; "who should be there talking to your son but the wife of the Farmer of Dorngrüt!"

"No! really!" ejaculated Anna, rising instantly; "is that she?"

"Certainly," was the reply; "what can she have come for? She doesn't show herself here three times in the year; not even to come to church."

Nevertheless Anna advanced, smoothing her

apron well first, and her face radiant with expectation. She begged the visitor to walk in, and only a few preliminary hesitations were gone through before she did so, impelled by a reciprocal curiosity.

Once inside, she soon accepted a seat, and over the proffered cake and glass of wine, recounted afresh how Andrew had been taken up for dead and brought to their door, and how she had washed his face and bathed his head; and then how, shortly after he had come to himself, he had insisted upon leaving them, though they had done all they possibly could to keep him.

All these spontaneous excuses soon disarmed Anna, who began immediately to expatiate upon her informant's kindness and hospitality, and upon her son's deserts; saying that, really if she had lost him she would not have wished to live; and tears started again from her eyes at the thought.

"I'm something like you in that," replied her visitor; "although I do think sometimes that one would be better off without children. When they're little they're always getting in the way; and when they're big they're always out of the way, while we're breaking our backs with toiling for them; for of course children expect to live as their parents have lived; and it's only right they should."

These sentiments were by way of interlude in the recital of how many children she and her

husband had, and how many were married, and a great deal better off than their parents.

Anna had occasionally put in a rational word or two, but had not entered upon a corresponding narration on her side. These two women were a complete contrast: one might be compared to a comely pat of fresh butter, and the other to a blackened coffee-pot. There was good stuff in both; but the former was thoroughly and entirely good and inviting; while, as to the other, care must be taken not to soil one's fingers, and it remained to be seen whether anything good came out of it or not.

Anna was so sleek and spotless, so wonderfully fresh and well-looking for a woman of her age, her words were so wise and to the point, and her movements so quick and supple, it was impossible not to feel an immediate respect and liking for her; and it was evident she was a woman who might sit down with an equally good grace either to a cup of tea or a rasher of bacon.

The other was quite as much dressed; but her clothes were fusty: her hands were not clean, especially her nails. Her face, without being positively dirty, lacked freshness; and her manners were pretentious. She talked fluently, but it was impossible, while listening to her, not to ask one's self how much to believe, and how much to doubt. Wherever she was, she made an evident point of

taking the lead, and choosing the best seat, but never looked at home in it. The more Anna inspired her with involuntary respect, the more her self-assertion increased, and the more it betrayed itself. The more she assumed an air of importance, the more Anna's simplicity took effect.

All this was perfectly patent to the hostess, who sat by inwardly delighted at the last comer's embarrassment, and could have sat on all day enjoying the scene. But Christian proposing to return home, Anna merely renewed her grateful thanks, especially commending them to the young girl who had had Andrew carried to Dorngrüt from the forest; and added, how pleased she would be to make her acquaintance and thank her in person. Indeed, she hoped they would all soon come to Liebwyl. She trusted she might some day be able to repay them for their kindness.

"Nay, don't speak of it," replied the other; "but there's no saying that we sha'n't see you there some day or other. When one has daughters, there's no knowing what unexpected events may happen!"

Anna took no notice of this allusion, but drew Christian aside to ask him whether he didn't think they ought to give the young men of the house something after their kindness to Andrew.

"I was thinking of that," he replied, drawing

the huge leather bag out of his pocket, and taking a handful of crown pieces out of it, which he handed to the hostess with a message for her sons, that they were to drink to Andrew's health.

"Oh! no, pray! Really this is quite unnecessary; no! this'll never do!" exclaimed the host, opening his eyes extra wide. "Really, not one man in a hundred would behave so handsomely. Besides, the young men didn't do it for money. I'm quite sure not one of them expected any reward; and if they did, half this would suffice." Nevertheless he yielded; the Dorngrüt peasant looking on with extreme surprise, and wondering intensely how much it was. Dragon now set off briskly, amidst repeated adieus from all assembled.

After every departure, bystanders are sure to hurl a ball or two, a sympathetic or a cynical word, according to the nature of their weapon. There are some who would revile even an angel if once his back were turned.

The hostess and the visitor from Dorngrüt stood by, taking their last look: the former kept up a brisk fire of praises and compliments, as to what excellent people they were; so kind and affable to everyone, and without a bit of pride; while some people were always setting up for something better than they really were: and how generous they were; and how, when she had asked Andrew whether he didn't mean to prosecute, he had

replied, "Bah! that would be a queer way of thanking God for my escape!" She really thought that excellent! She'd like to know how many men in a hundred would have answered that way! "Indeed," she summed up, "if I'd a daughter, and there was the slightest chance of getting him for a son-in-law, I should be as happy as though one of them were marrying a prince."

The grocer, seeing this *tête-à-tête*, ran across the street, and joined in the acclamations; remarking what a lady Anna was, and how she had never bargained the least: adding, "I'm not in the habit of tacking on to my prices, as some people do, but if I had been, I am quite sure that, for all the gold in the world, I couldn't have overcharged her. Besides, you know, people of that kind have a great many acquaintances; and if they mention that at such and such a shop they've got a good thing at a fair price, it's much more likely to answer than anything that's been got out of them over and above."

"Yes! and it's just the same with us," responded the hostess; "some innkeepers seem to imagine they risk nothing by fleecing people now and then; but it's sure to be talked of, and then all confidence is lost: reputation's like burnt milk, when once it's got that flavour it's impossible to give it any other."

The farmer's wife had never in her whole life

returned home so charged. A basket of pears on her head and a bucket in each hand would have been nothing compared to the weight of news she had to carry. It was impossible not to imagine to herself how happy her Marian might be with a young man like that, instead of old Keller, with whom she herself would have been dismayed in her young days, although she had never been half so fastidious as her daughter. True, when Marian pleaded and wept, she had tried to console her by telling her that after all her father was older than Keller, and that she managed to get on very fairly with him; and that a daughter should not wish to do better than her mother: still, something told her that this sort of consolation was not sufficient; so she generally concluded with:

"Bah! There's no need to make such a fuss about it. It won't be for long. A man with such a cough as he has won't live to be a hundred. I really don't think he'll be bad to manage: if it were a third, that would be different, for a third seldom fares better than the other two; but a fourth finds him a little bit broken, and hasn't long to wait till it's over: and then, you know, you'll be set up for life! You'll have nothing to do but to sit in your chair and order what you please: coffee half a dozen times a day if you like."

Such was the comfort proffered to poor Marian

by her mother; and yet, in her secret heart, she hankered after something more like personal satisfaction, and did not prefer money alone to the exclusion of everything else for her daughter. It seemed to her, that if Marian could but be equally well provided for elsewhere, it might perhaps not be necessary after all to throw her away upon the old man in question, for the purpose of enriching the family: so that, if Keller did not soon agree to the marriage settlement, so much the worse for him and the better for Marian. She could see very well that the young man had quite taken her fancy: anyhow, he might be made useful one way or the other. Besides, Marian was just the girl for such a position: she had all the same fanciful ideas as the family at Liebwyl, and very much the same manners; that "touch-me-not" air about her, that made many men afraid to speak to her: and then "she's so full of scruples about all sorts of things that other people think nothing of, just as I perceived in the other family."

Such were her reflections as she walked homewards; and on arriving there, with all the air and spirit of a diplomatist, she began by remarking to her husband:

"It's clear these are no common sort of people. If we'd only Marian to think of, I don't see that we could do better for her; at least, if old Keller doesn't make up his mind quickly about the

settlement. Certainly they've not said much about it themselves. I'm inclined to think that busybody at the inn has told them there's something else on the *tapis;* but I believe if we want to manage it we've only to go to Liebwyl: they pressed me very much to do so.

"They'd be queer people that wouldn't jump at it," she continued, turning to her daughter, who had hovered about anxiously during these opening remarks; "after all, we don't know what they have to say for themselves, except that they're rich: that was very clear by the way they threw their money about. I shouldn't wonder if they prove to be Anabaptists. I hear there are a good many in that neighbourhood."

"I don't think so, mother," interposed Marian; "I've heard that Anabaptists don't approve of dancing."

"Always thinking of dancing," was the reply; "as if that was the great business of life. You'll repent it if you don't change your mind on that point soon, and take a little more interest in the prices of flour, and the time for planting garden crops; and especially if you don't try and help your father and mother in getting you suitably settled for life."

There had been but little conversation in the cart that had just left Dorngrüt for Liebwyl. Anna

had been full of anxieties as to Andrew's injuries, and he had been fully occupied with Dragon, though the animal obeyed Andrew much better than his father. As for Christian, he had tried in vain to keep awake by smoking his pipe.

Those at home were in intense excitement when the vehicle drew up. All the inhabitants of the house bounded out of it at every opening, with one general cry of welcome. The inferior animals were no exception. The sheep bleated, the horses neighed, the dog frisked about wagging his tail, while the less demonstrative cat appeared on the threshold at the same moment, with its tail in the air. There were no brusque and importunate questionings, as these by one accord were postponed till all the parcels had been opened and disposed of, the cart and horse put up, hunger and thirst appeased, and all superfluous ears well out of the way.

Andrew, in spite of his fatigue, was as impatient for this moment as anyone else: he was longing to know what his parents had said.

Annette was grievously disappointed when she found that all it amounted to was, that her father and mother had seen the mother of Marian; and she was still further annoyed because they said so very little about her. In fact, Annette would not forgive them for not having done more in the matter.

"Really, if I had been there, I'm convinced I could have accomplished something."

When it had been clearly explained that the moment for this had not arrived, seeing that there was another aspirant, she couldn't sufficiently express her horror and surprise that there should be parents ready to traffic with their daughter's happiness.

"If I were in Marian's place," she exclaimed, with a deep sigh, "I don't hesitate to say I should feel no love or respect for them whatever, and I should think it my duty to run away!"

Anna sighed also; and Christian took a strong pull at his pipe. As for Andrew, the tears darted to his eyes.

"I could see already," he began, "that there was something on your mind, mother; and now I know what it was. These people don't please you, and however high or wealthy they might be, you wouldn't feel satisfied. But then, mother, when do we ever find everything combined in this world? Sometimes there's one thing, and sometimes another: if the parents were all right, perhaps there might be some fault in the girl. I don't like them any more than you do; and if I didn't really and truly love Marian, especially since we found each other again the other night,——in fact, I can't give her up. But then she's so utterly unlike

her parents in every way, and everyone who knows her says so; indeed, it's evident that she often feels ashamed of them. Besides, once here, she would be far away from them, and she wouldn't need to see them many times in the course of the year. And then you'd see what she is in herself. It's only when people live among their kind that they've fair play."

"It may be so," replied Christian, "or it may not. Blood is blood, and habit is a great master: but I've nothing to say against it; you're old enough to choose for yourself, and you've a right to please yourself."

"Nay, father, don't think that I'm so rash as to shut my eyes to all the risks. I know that it's a thing for all time, and probably for eternity. I get so anxious sometimes that I begin to think I'd better remain single, for then we know the worst, at any rate: but after all this is not what God has ordered, and both we and our parents are right in aiming at a happy marriage. Still, I don't want to rush into it blindfold, nor even to think that it must needs be because I've set my heart upon it. You know there's no hurry. I want to look at it from all sides; and I assure you, if I see the least thing that makes me really doubtful, I shall give it up, even if it breaks my heart in doing so. I suppose though, I should get over it in time; whereas an unsatisfactory marriage is an endless

misery, it propagates sin from generation to generation."

"But, Andrew," inquired Annette, "how are you to pursue the affair? It seems nothing has been said to the parents, and they may go and publish the banns next Sunday."

"Never mind, Annette, leave that to me;" (after a momentary hesitation) "I think I can get on now without help."

"Well, that's flattering, certainly! but it's not the usual way. I assure you, sisters are generally everything on these occasions, and I don't know why I should be an exception. But, as you please. Only, if you find you want me after all, I shall be ready and willing all the same."

Andrew scarcely closed his eyes all that night. His heart was so heavy that he scarcely felt the pain in his head. The moral atmosphere of Dorngrüt was repugnant to him, and the *ménage* equally so. He had felt utterly out of his element amongst the people. In spite of himself, he had involuntarily thanked God that he was not like them. He had realized that life, with such a woman as Marian's mother, would hardly be worth the name. In a sphere like his own, which had borne a certain stamp for generations, and where life is what it ought to be, marriage is regarded with a reverence very different from the spirit in which it would be contracted elsewhere—after a

hasty, superficial acquaintance, and inaugurated in the cheapest and readiest way possible. Indeed, in a thoughtful family of this class, it would involve even more reflection and anxiety than in a more sophisticated walk of life; inasmuch as here the whole tone, spirit, and working of the establishment proceeds from the wife, the few servants in a Bernese farm-house being mere machines. Now Marian had appeared thoroughly eligible in this aspect of the case; reserved, dignified, amiable, of sweet and refined expression, quick and energetic, and instinctively apt at governing. She had never contradicted her parents; both cat and dog hovered about her, and the pigeons always came down and fluttered in her path. All this looked well; but then these were but surface signs after all; and in his short interviews with her there had not been time for Andrew to read what was passing in her mind. Now it not unfrequently happens that a girl may represent herself at this juncture as something far better than she really is, and the mistake is perceived only when too late. Andrew had seen more than one such instance. What if the same should happen to him! What if his marriage should bring down his parents' grey hairs with sorrow to the grave! He did not actually anticipate this as a possibility, only he warned himself seriously against infatuation.

To secure a quiet *tête-à-tête*, solitude or a crowd serve equally well.

When Andrew returned to his room at Dorngrüt to find his pocket-handkerchief, he contrived to propose a meeting with Marian at a little hamlet notorious for the wretchedness of its inn. She responded with a nod; and for this reason he considered himself competent to pursue the acquaintance without the intervention of Annette.

On the appointed day Andrew was at the rendezvous betimes, and anxiously on the look-out for Marian in the direction of Dorngrüt. A raw wind was chasing the clouds along the sky. The day was sunless, and Andrew's impressions became more and more dreary as his impatience increased. Truly these occasions are amongst the greatest of life's ordeals.

"Can there possibly be any mistake? Will she come after all? Have they prevented her? Has she changed her mind about it?" Such were some of the questions that tormented Andrew, who for weeks had had a scene vividly depicted to his mind's eye, in which he arrived at the hamlet from one quarter, while Marian advanced from the opposite direction simultaneously.

And now he had been waiting here for hours already. He had been asked more than once what he would have; and at last, after several evasive answers, he had ordered some food.

The servant thereupon appeared with a plate, saying that she would bring the rest when the boy had fetched the bread; adding, that perhaps he was expecting some one, and was in no hurry to begin to eat.

He was wondering whether this was a mere impulse of curiosity, or whether the speaker had any motive for her remarks, when the door opened slowly, with a "Good morning, everybody!" and there stood in the middle of the room, the very embodiment of confusion, a young blushing girl whom the servant rose to greet, inquiring, "Can I serve you?"

Andrew felt suddenly bewildered, and advanced to meet her.

The servant thereupon, seeing they were friends, inquired whether they would partake of refreshments together, and then asked whether they would prefer the room upstairs; "not that there's much fear of your being interrupted here," she continued, "if you've anything to say, for we've mighty few visitors in such a hole as this."—The more a servant and her mistress are at variance, the more the former is confidential with strangers.

True, the room was small, and not well furnished; but to Andrew and Marian it was a Paradise when once they were seated side by side. They had so much to say to each other, however, that it was difficult to make a commencement.

Marian was in homely work-day dress; in short, more like that of a servant than of a wealthy farmer's daughter: but this was only an instance of the superiority of something else to mere dress.

"I began to think you'd never come," said Andrew.

"Indeed, I thought so too," replied Marian. "It seems a sort of miracle that I'm here."

"Did you really not wish to come? Was it only that you didn't like to disappoint me?"

"Don't be angry; but it was only because when you asked me I hadn't time to think, that I assented."

"How? Is it that you really don't care for me, or have you only been deceiving me when you've seemed to feel for me what I felt for you?"

At these words Marian fixed her grave tearful eyes upon Andrew, and replied slowly:

"You can hardly imagine my position. I am not in the habit of going about in this way. This is the very first time I've ever consented to meeting any one; and indeed I almost wished they wouldn't let me come. We're always over head and ears in work, and it's vain to remonstrate. So that I've begun to think it's no use to attempt it, and that I'd better let things take their course."

"Indeed; I should consider a girl worth very little that would come to that conclusion. Your parents may be persuaded, like any others."

"Perhaps so: but one thing I particularly wanted to see you for, was to ask you not to think anything of the way my parents allowed you to leave our house when you were only half recovered. The secret of it was, that they were afraid of the old man they want me to marry. I think they saw that we should have liked to talk a little together, and that this might disturb their projects. You know when my father wishes a thing, he'll take no refusal. So I wanted just to come and tell you that it's no use tormenting yourself about me, for it'll do no good. Perhaps we shall never meet again while we live."

"No! no! I'm not going to believe that. How much have we tried already to prevent it? The first thing is to know whether you really love me, and then we shall see whether they'll give you to old Keller or to me. All depends upon how you feel."

"As to that, I shouldn't be here if I didn't love you. I wouldn't have taken such a step for anyone else in the world; and I almost hate myself for it, for I even had to prevaricate about bringing a present to a little godchild, and a half-truth is as bad as a lie. My father looked dreadfully suspicious when he consented; but my mother is not quite past pity, and she prevailed. Oh! I wish I were safe at home again."

"How! aren't you happy here with me?"

"Oh! don't torment me with such questions. It's evident you don't know what it is to tremble for fear of whom you may meet or what may happen: all feeling of pleasure is lost in the fear of what may follow. Every day is bringing me nearer to what I dread far more than death itself. You can't put yourself into my position."

"Perhaps I can. I've known what trouble is too, and to the extent of having no thought for anything else. So then, if you were left to yourself, you would consent to become my wife?"

"Oh! don't tempt me: the very thought of such a thing is maddening, because it always brings another dreaded figure before my eyes; and the thought of him makes me shudder."

"Then you do think me superior to him in person?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"Well, but suppose he was of my age and my looks, which would you choose?"

"Don't irritate me! If I'd expected this, I would certainly not have come here, even if I'd promised you ever so much. No, certainly, I abhor him, body and soul. I might put up with a great deal, but not with his vices, and his cruelty to all his own people. Think of living with a person hated by everyone around, and with my hands tied so that I could counteract nothing. It's this that I dread, because I know I could

never endure it. I hear that in your home everything's good and peaceable and right, and one may get good, which is what I want so much. I sometimes think God will surely not let me be dragged downwards that way, on the very high road to hell."

"Oh! but God generally helps those who help themselves; and besides, if you think of Him seriously, doesn't it seem to you that He may have let us meet opportunely, that I may rescue you from such a fate?"

"If I think of Him seriously! How else should I ever think of God, and at such a time as this?"

"Forgive me; that was not what I meant: but I know, in looking back, that I've often expected God would bring about such and such a thing, which, after all, it was clearly my duty to seek for myself: and aren't we sometimes inclined to magnify a thing into a question of religion, which is really only a matter of the commonest morality —not but what the two belong to each other; only everything in its place. I've been reflecting, that if you really see your soul would be endangered by such a marriage, you will represent this to your parents, and then they cannot have a word to say. As to us at home, I don't mean to pretend that we're perfect—indeed we've had our share of wretchedness; but I hope, by God's grace, it is all over now. Nevertheless, I'm quite sure

that even when things were at the worst—it began about the loss of some money—if only anyone of us had reminded the others that we were going fully in face of the Bible, it would have all ceased."

"Ah! how I envy you to be able to say so. I have never told anyone, and couldn't tell anyone but you, that, alas! it's quite the other way with us. If I were to speak as you advise, they would only laugh, or call me an idiot. They've no other aim but money, and it's impossible not to see that they mean to use me as a bait to attract it into the family; just as the poor writhing worm is used to catch the fish. It's very clear that they don't care for me either as to body or soul, life or eternity, but only mean to make use of me; and they pay no more attention to my entreaties than the angler does to the agonies of the poor worm."

"This is sad. But surely they must have some conscience, some respect for religion?"

"They ought; and of course they have studied it long ago, and taken the Communion; but it seems never to have done them any good. Oh! I can't tell you what I suffer on account of this, when I know that a prayer is scarcely ever heard under our roof, but that it resounds with oaths and loose unseemly talk. Indeed, when it thunders, or when I reflect that perhaps only some chance spark would suffice to burn our house over our heads—you know it's all wood and thatch—

and that before we had time to cry for mercy, we might be consumed by the flames; when I think of all this at night, I get so terrified that I get up and go all round the house to see that there's no sign of fire. I'm almost as much afraid of meeting them, because I know they wouldn't believe my fears, and they'd suspect me of something else. Sometimes I've ventured to remind them of right and wrong, and of the judgment to come; but they've only told me to mind my own affairs, and asked me whether I really believe all that the pastors prate about. Oh! how I've prayed that God would take me away; and now it seems as though I were going to be taken; but how, and where?"

"Oh! stop, stop! don't speak that way. Would it be like God's goodness to treat you so? No! when we meet one we can love and trust, it is his sending; all that He does is necessarily good."

"Possibly; but I don't know what to think: imagine what it must be to lead such a life as mine, and not to see a way of escape."

"As to that, never fear. We're not Pagans! Remember, I've cared for you from the very moment we first met. I confess I've been terribly anxious since I got to know your parents, for I could see they thought of nothing but what was material, and it's not this that can procure happiness; I know this now by experience. I've

had many fears lest you should be of the same disposition—you mustn't mind my saying so—and nothing would induce me to take a wife into our house who is not pious and right-minded; especially because I know that she'd be well off with us in every way, and I should wish my parents to be fortunate in her. But now I know how the matter stands, and I've a good hope that all will end well."

"Oh! to live in such a home! to be in peace day and night! I think it would be a sort of heaven to me if we were ever so poor! But I believe it's impossible: when my father has made a plan, he never relinquishes it. I can hold out for a time, I dare say, but I know I cannot escape."

"Listen! If you'll give me your word, and keep it, we'll see what we can do. But all depends upon yourself. If you are not firm and resolute, all is lost. Now, if you consent, give me your hand and say, 'Yes, please God.'"

Marian turned from red to pale, and tears streamed down her face. She slowly proffered her hand, and placing it in Andrew's said solemnly:

"Yes, please God;" whereupon, leaning one arm upon his shoulder and her head upon her arm, she sobbed without restraint.

Andrew silently took her other hand in his, and for some minutes not a word was said. Perhaps both hearts ascended in prayer to the Author of

their attachment, their common Father, and the God of love.

"Here, Marian, take this, and keep it as a sign of our engagement," said Andrew, presenting her with his watch. "I know no keepsake is necessary, but I should like to think you have something of mine; and when you hear it beat you must remember that my heart is beating for you."

Marian gazed at the massive silver watch, with its white face and large black figures in relief, and its solid silver chain.

"I should delight to keep it," she answered, "but I daren't. I should never dare to bring it out, and I might not be able to hide it. No, take it back. I agree with you that no pledge is necessary between us; though if it were possible, I should like to have some little thing of yours to carry about with me."

"What can I give you? If I'd thought of it I would have brought you a ring or a chain; but I've nothing whatever with me."

"A ring or a chain! Why I should no more dare to wear either of them than the watch; but if you have a coin in your pocket—anything'll do—and I'll give you one in exchange; it'll answer quite as well as the watch, and better."

Hereupon Andrew produced a new five-franc piece, and Marian a florin, neither of which could at all excite curiosity.

Andrew placed his in his waistcoat pocket, and Marian kept hers in her hand. They had now such a full and entire confidence in each other, that there was nothing either of them would not or could not have told the other. Marian recounted to Andrew what she had felt as her father drove her home after their first meeting. She owned that she had previously exclaimed to herself, this one or none! And when she had lost sight of him, it had seemed to her almost like a living death. She had been always on the watch to see him again, and at church she had always dreaded lest she should hear his banns published; she believed she had dreamed of him every night, only to awake to the recollection of the old man she was threatened with.

Andrew proceeded to explain the domestic troubles that had deterred him from confiding in his mother; and mentioned that before he was able to do so, he had learnt that Marian's parents were very rich, and wanted to be richer through her marriage. Then he detailed how, the very day that peace was restored to their family, he had told them all where his heart was, and they had all sympathised with him, and resolved to help him in every possible way, when suddenly the fire-bell had been heard, which was the means of bringing him once again into her presence.

"All this convinces me," he went on to say, "that Providence would have it so."

"Ah! now I begin to understand," replied Marian, "why it was that you were so long without making any inquiry about me. And now I forgive you: but to make amends you must be very, very good and true to me, for it's only your affection that can give me courage for what lies before me. And now tell me, what plan do you propose?"

The answer was not easy, especially as Marian impressed upon him that the case had become urgent, seeing that Keller had latterly appeared inclined to yield to her father's conditions, and had announced that as soon as they were disposed to publish the banns, he was ready to sign the settlement to their satisfaction.

"I'm inclined to think there's nothing for it but for me to go boldly to your father; only you must be close at hand to vouch for our being of one mind."

"Oh! no; wouldn't it be better for your father to come over, and for me to keep out of the way unless called for?"

"Certainly gradual measures do sometimes look the most promising; only that sometimes, while beating about the bush, the game escapes."

Marian conjured him to control himself, whichever plan was adopted, and on no account to lose his temper, or give her parents the slightest pretext for forbidding him the house; adding that she

trembled at the thought of the turn it might take.

Andrew was more and more charmed with Marian the more he saw her. She was so neat and clean, in spite of her shabby clothes, she spoke so rationally, and with so much frankness. She ate and drank so unaffectedly—unlike some would-be fashionable people, who flourish their knife about, with their little finger up in the air, at the same time stabbing the meat on their plate with the fork grasped in their fist, and always refuse "sauer kraut" because they have so much of it at home. And even when she picked the chicken bones—in true peasant fashion—she did it with a certain grace and finish, which is saying not a little. Andrew could have watched her all day; whereas there are some persons positively insupportable at table. He remarked further a certain likeness to his mother; neither here nor there, but everywhere together: and wondering more and more how she could be so unlike the rest of her family, he inquired whether she had always lived at home: whereupon he learnt, that in her early childhood she had spent several years with her grandmother, a rare and excellent woman. She went on to say that at her death she had felt so desolate—for she had loved her with all her heart, as the old lady loved her in return—that she had longed to die to follow her; and it was some time before

she was at all able to reconcile herself to her home. She was not loved by anyone there, and nothing that she could do or say would please them. When once her sisters had left it was better, at least her mother was kinder to her, but her father was never anything but bitter against her. She had heard that at her birth, he had been very vexed at having another child; but that was hardly her fault.

How quickly time flies while two people talk happily and unreservedly together! and how slowly while one is under restraint!—as slowly as the hours of night, when counted by the sick man on his wretched pallet.

Evening came before Andrew and Marian thought of separating. The latter was the first to perceive the lateness of the hour, and it required all her resolution to make a move. Andrew would have insisted upon accompanying her home, but she stoutly refused; remarking, that where there is a possibility of mischief-making, Satan prompts certain people whom you would think a hundred miles away, to take that one particular road, and fields have eyes and woods have ears! So they separated at the door, with many re-assurances and good wishes, taking a friendly leave of the servant, who hoped to see them again, and who would be happy to be of use to them in any way. Andrew, as usual, paying her liberally for her attention.

Marian's home-circumstances did indeed add poignancy to the pang of this separation.

I suppose no inhabitant of Switzerland is unacquainted with the "Devil's Bridge" in the Canton of Berne. It springs on one side from a sunny, fertile, well-watered expanse, besprinkled with smiling farms and cottages inhabited by contented happy peasants, and musical with the voices and tinkling bells of grazing cattle. The opposite side, on the contrary, exhibits black and sterile peaks, rapid, resistless, and fiercely foaming torrents, and mountain mists seldom dispersed by the sun.

Marian's homeward walk may justly be compared to the above. How sad to think that but the will of her own parents was wanting to allow of her recrossing this bridge, and betaking herself for life to these "green pastures and still waters!" Could any child so situated fail to realize herself as a sacrifice to Moloch? Such sacrifices, alas! have not yet ceased, although the name of the idol has changed to that of Money, or sometimes Family Pride. How many a life and honour is slain upon this altar! And should the victim plead or complain, parents will exclaim at the insensate folly and ingratitude of children, who will not consider their real interests, so that they are really obliged to decide for them; as otherwise they would behave like mere babies, and cry for a doll, and fancy that nothing else in the world would make

them happy! Should it indeed be so, it were well to use authority; but sometimes it will happen that the children are right, and the parents wrong; and then compulsion becomes a veritable cruelty. There can be no law to restrain either the folly of children or the cruelty of parents, were all the combined wisdom of the world engaged to invent it. The one and only remedy that can prevail, is that spirit of Christian wisdom which appreciates everything according to its true relative value.

Andrew, unlike Marian, returned home on wings of hope and joy. The girl of his choice was now his own, as completely as though she had been called into existence to become his wife. The stimulus of air and exercise heightened this feeling of confidence, so that, when he reached home he was free from every shade of misgiving. "Surely," thought he, "God is just, and governs all in mercy."

It was late when he arrived, nevertheless the lights were not yet out. Outside the house, he encountered his father smoking his pipe. Inside his mother was reading the Bible, Annette sitting by sewing. Felix was dozing close to the stove.

Notwithstanding his repeated assurances that he was neither hungry nor thirsty, and that they really must not disturb themselves for him, a little table was spread for him in no time. This he did justice to after all, chatting upon indifferent subjects

—the unusually warm weather, the rye that was already fit for cutting, the promise of apples and pears this year, and the unusual quantity of cherries in some districts.

When Annette had cleared the table, after offering what was left to her father and Felix (in farm-house fashion), Anna began:

"Well, now let us hear—How did you get on? Did she meet you?"

And Andrew forthwith related how anxiously and long he had waited, and then all the girl had said, and how he had liked her better and better, and how deeply she was to be pitied; finally, how not a creature had appeared who could possibly betray them.

"Come! so far all's well. I was very much afraid they wouldn't let her go out, or might send some one after her."

"But think, mother, how sad it must be to be obliged to keep everything to herself on returning home, when there's nothing in her heart that she need blush for! On the contrary, it's only what a mother should be glad to hear, and should hear the very first. Oh! how thankful I felt as I walked home, that everything is so different here! I said to myself as I drew near the house—just exactly what I found when I got here—"my father 'll be on the flags with his pipe in his mouth, and mother's sure to be reading her Bible;

and I was all impatience to meet you. Oh! what a comfort it is to have a home where you can empty your heart of all its thoughts, and go to bed full of peace and content!"

"You're right, Andrew," replied his father; "and with God's help it shall always be so with us. We'll act like people whose house has only just escaped from taking fire: we'll be always on our guard in future."

"I hope so too, father," remarked Annette; "it's the only way to be happy. But now, about this girl. I'm really curious to see what she's like, that she's bewitched Andrew so. I don't suppose I'm so very stupid, and yet I've never had this power over anyone yet. Those that I've rebuffed have taken it very easily: and sometimes, when mothers of sons have asked me what my dowry was likely to be, and I've replied, a hen and chickens and a new suit of clothes—they've decamped pretty quickly without seeing the fun I've had out of them. And on the other side, there's not a creature in the world that I should break my heart about. I really should like to know what it is to be in love! whether it's only an imaginary feeling, or whether some hearts are so constituted that they take fire and set fire to others, like dry flax when a light's put to it. I should think it must be exciting. I confess I should really like to try. Andrew, what's the recipe?"

"Annette, Annette," replied her mother gravely, "don't jest about what you don't understand, moreover about what's far too solemn for jesting. I know you don't mean any harm, but unseemly trifling is sure to bring its punishment. Till you know what love is, it's no business of yours to inquire. I'm not one of those who believe in spells and philtres, like some of the people about here—and you know how much money some designing people contrive to make out of this belief—but I know and believe that there is a moment in one's life when love suddenly takes possession of the heart, just as though a great heavy stone were thrown into it. I can speak from experience; and I'm convinced that this was precisely the case with Andrew when he first met Marian."

"Now, mother, tell us what you know about it from experience," was the rejoinder; and thereupon every one present prepared to listen intently, while Anna began.

"Children, who knows how short a time I may be spared to you! so what I have to tell I'll tell you at once for your profit.

"When first your father began to court me, I was not at all disposed to like him. I was just such a girl as Annette, and I fancied there was scarcely anyone I couldn't fancy more readily than him. But something happened one day at a fair at

Laquan. I saw what I shall never, never forget; and it was then that the stone fell into my heart and I suddenly saw things as I've seen them ever since. I'll tell you how it happened: it costs me something to speak of it, but it may be useful to you, and you may not have me with you long. As I said, it was at the fair at Laquan, and I was dancing with a young man who conducted himself foolishly, to say the least. We were both to blame. Suddenly I saw some one beckoning to me from outside the window. I didn't know who it was, but the eyes were as familiar to me as if they had been my own. I forgot everything, left the dance and my partner, and went out. I could see no one outside like the person that had appeared at the window, till suddenly, in a far corner I saw your father standing: his back was turned, and his face was buried in his handkerchief. At first I thought that perhaps his nose was bleeding, but I soon perceived that he was weeping bitterly. It was at that moment that I felt the stone thrown into my heart, and from that day I said to myself, him or none; for indeed the sight of his sorrow had gone to my heart. What I endured while he kept away, and till the whole thing was decided, I can never describe. Day and night I had his weeping face before me. But it's all over now; only I learnt a lesson then that I shall never

forget, and I'm satisfied to have told you all about it."

"Well!" remarked Annette, with a sigh, "I think it would require a stone of a ton weight to be thrown into my heart before it would make me pine for anyone. I've been invited time after time to a meeting, and I've never once been yet, at least not on purpose to be talked to."

Andrew coloured.

"Annette," replied her mother, "don't go on about what you don't understand. You're like a person who would laugh in summer at those who sit by the stove and wear woollen stockings in winter. Your never having wished to go and be solicited is no reason why others shouldn't do so. The only thing is, that so many girls go thoughtlessly. But when young people meet by appointment at a respectable inn, and in all simplicity and rectitude, no one can say a word against it; it's the custom of the country, and if it is sometimes abused, it's only like every other good thing, for that matter. But think for a moment, what you'd feel if you were in that poor young girl's position, threatened by your parents with a marriage that would take all the joy and dignity out of your life; and that some young man that you loved and respected offered to rescue you, and was all love and pity and respect for you, and asked you to meet him at a village

inn to consult with you about it, do you think you wouldn't go?"

"Well, I hardly know, mother; I think I should do as you advised me."

"Silly girl, you're determined not to talk sense. But now, children, it's getting late; go to bed all of you, and thank God that we all desire each other's happiness, and that we can talk quite freely and affectionately together again; and pray that it may be always so."

"Andrew," whispered Annette, "don't be angry with me. I confess I'm jealous of this girl that you love now better than me; and I know it'll be so till I've met with someone that I love better than I love you. However, I'd give a great deal to see if she really is such a wonder that no one else in the world can be compared to her. If so, more's the pity for everyone that can't have her!"

"No, no, Annette," said Anna; "thank God everyone doesn't see with the same eyes, or it would be a poor look-out indeed. As for me, I don't know another man in the world to be compared with your father; and I know no children to be compared to mine. Some day I hope someone or other will think you the best and loveliest girl in the whole world."

PART IV.

ANDREW was not long without proposing to himself to take up the thread of the acquaintance; but it became evident thereupon—as is so often the case when an interval occurs between deciding and acting—that almost all his energy had been expended in the formation of the project, very little being left for its execution. Men have generally more difficulty than women in striking out anything new; and an affair of this kind is never easy under any circumstances; indeed, the more it lags the more the chief actor feels tempted to call in others to his assistance.

Andrew had repeatedly regretted not having agreed to Marian's proposal, that his father should negotiate, especially as this was a very usual proceeding.

As often as not the young man's father addresses himself to the parents of the girl thus:

"I find, neighbour, that my son has taken a fancy to your daughter. God willing, I consent to it for my part, and I conclude you can have no

objection; but I want just to know what you will be able to settle upon her. I suppose not less than a hundred pounds?"

"Really! Well, as to the connection, I'm delighted to hear it; but I couldn't possibly afford more than fifty?"

"Seriously?"

"Most seriously; not a franc beyond; and indeed that's a great deal for a poor man like me."

"Umph! Perhaps after all it may not be the will of God that these two should marry. His ways are not our ways, and they're past our finding out. Good night, I'm sorry to have troubled you."

"Oh, not at all. Good night."

This custom, sanctioned by usage, has its origin in the natural solicitude of parents for the material as well as the moral good and happiness of their children, and furnishes an excellent opportunity for expatiating upon their good qualities and their superior education.

Andrew's parents would have been only too happy to undertake this errand, but that he had decided against this, and did not like to confess his loss of courage, and alter the arrangement. It became urgent, therefore, that he should proceed; but God only knew at the cost of how many misgivings. He conned the whole interview beforehand, imagining all possible contingencies, and providing

measures for each; and then finally resolved that he would discard all preparation, and be guided by what occurred.

He accordingly hastened to Dorngrüt, and was soon seated with a glass of wine before him at the inn where his parents had appeared to fetch him. The hostess, seated opposite him, had no great encouragement to offer. She dwelt more and more upon the worth of the young girl, remarking that he would be well repaid for any trouble if he got her, at least as to herself; as to her fortune, he might probably do better elsewhere, for her parents would certainly not settle upon her a farthing more than they could help. "And then too," she added, "it's reported that the old man Keller has agreed to have the banns published next Sunday." If she might say what she thought, she would advise him to go to the house, taking some little present with him to make him welcome; if the worst came to the worst he would have tried, and with this sort of people it was always better to be too bold than too cringing.

Thus advised Andrew provided himself with a loaf of sugar weighing four pounds, and a pound of coffee, and set out with these in his bag, having first committed his concern to God, like a soldier on the eve of battle.

He soon descried the farm, half new and half old, half grey and half white. No one was out-

side, not even a cock or a hen; all was profoundly still and silent. He knocked at the side door, then at the front door; no sign. The more he knocked the more uneasy he became. After the third attempt his heart beat violently. All his senses were on the rack. He stepped inside; all was equally silent: at this moment he was suddenly startled by the sound of a voice, though he could distinguish no one, till he presently perceived, first the nose, and then the whole figure of the farmer's wife, who slowly emerged from among her tall growing beans.

"What is it?" she inquired as she extricated herself slowly, evidently so as to gain time for consideration.— Slowness is an excellent thing when one is delightfully indifferent to the convenience and feelings of other people.

Though Andrew saluted her with all due deference, he was not asked to walk in, but was offered a seat on the bench outside. There he presented the sugar and coffee, remarking that, being in the neighbourhood, he had wished to bring some little present as a token of gratitude for all the care they had taken of him. She accepted the gift cordially, after repeated refusals, and went into the house, ejaculating to herself in a pleased undertone. When she returned her face wore a totally different expression—the sugar might actually have sweetened it. "You must wait a little," she resumed;

"You mustn't leave without having taken something."

It need hardly be said that Andrew willingly consented; so while she gradually emptied the beans from her apron into the basket, he brought himself to the point, and began by remarking, that a good wife might be very comfortable with them at Liebwyl, if he could find one; adding,

"I should certainly treat her kindly: as to money, I won't say that she couldn't possibly do better; but after all, it's only necessary to have enough, and that she might be sure of with us."

"Ah! yes, that's all very well," was the reply; "but to be kind and to be rich are two different things, and it's best to be both."

"True, but I know many a poor woman whose life is miserable in spite of a rich husband. Whereas, if I could find a wife to my mind, I think there's nothing I wouldn't give her, or do for her. Now, to tell the truth, I think your daughter's just the one."

"Nonsense; you surely don't mean it seriously: besides, if you did it would be quite too late. Marian's engaged. But for that I should like you well enough for a son-in-law; and I can quite believe she'd have been very happy with you. But really the thing's already decided."

"Hardly, I should say, unless she's consented to it; and perhaps you may yet find it possible to

accept me as a son-in-law. I'm convinced your daughter would prefer me."

"Oh! as to that I'm quite aware of it; and that'll only serve to make her more miserable afterwards. But then, when a young girl marries to her own liking, she's sure to change her mind afterwards, and accuse her husband of having over-persuaded her; whereas, when she marries from duty and submission, she naturally gets over it after a time. I know it is so by my own experience."

"Surely, if you have had this sorrow, you must feel the more reluctant for your daughter to experience it. See if you can't undo what's been done; you'll never repent it; and so long as you're my mother-in-law you shall be well cared for."

"No, it's really no use. You might as easily persuade that mountain to move, as make my husband change his mind; and he's set his heart upon giving Marian to old Keller. He wishes it for the sake of the boys; because in this way money will soon come into the family; whereas, settling a dowry upon a girl is generally a terrible loss to the rest. Keller has an excellent fortune, and we hope great things from it."

"Ah! but surely it's not only the boys that are your children! Sons and daughters should be equally dear to you."

"Not exactly; or at least, not in the same way.

I don't say that I'm not extremely sorry for Marian; but what's to be done? Her happiness is surely not the one and only thing, or I should have been very glad for you to have her. I could have liked the idea of living with you at Liebwyl well enough after my husband's death. I somehow think I sha'n't have him long; he coughs dreadfully at night, and he has such difficulty in getting his breath. I confess my life with him has not been a very happy one. I've never been free to spend a single penny as I pleased; so that I sometimes think I should get on quite as well alone when the time comes—you know we ought to be resigned. And then too, the boys are so thankless and disobedient, they really couldn't behave worse; and when everything's theirs it'll be a poor look out for me! But it always is so with sons; it's much better to go and live with a son-in-law. I should pay my own expenses, and you would see that I really got what was left me. It's not likely that I should spend it all; so that there would be something to leave you. I own I was very much struck with your mother: she seemed like one that would be obeyed; a pleasure that has never fallen to my lot, though I brought my husband a hundred and fifty pounds when I married him; in fact he's treated me like a dog ever since. Marian certainly won't have to suffer so long as I've suffered: it's hardly likely her husband can live forty years; twenty at

the very most. And yet after all, twenty years seems a long time to look forward to when it's all endurance."

Meanwhile dinner had been prepared in the kitchen: noon approached, and the voices of the labourers returning through the fields were heard, together with the barking of dogs. The mother now invited Andrew to walk in, telling him he would find something to eat, and remarking that it was quite as well the labourers should not see him.

Andrew entered the house, and was conducted into the same little inner room—Marian's—where he had first recovered consciousness. He hardly noticed the soup that was steaming on the table before him, he was so full of almost religious veneration for the room itself. He was still absorbed in contemplation when the door opened, and Marian herself appeared. At the sight of him she clapped her hands with delight, changing colour repeatedly, and when she offered him her right hand it trembled violently.

"Don't be alarmed, Marian; your mother's not vexed with us."

"Be quick and say what you have to say to each other," exclaimed the mother; "get your dinner quickly, and the sooner you're off the better. No good can come of your being here: if Keller should happen to look in, what would become of us?"

"Oh! mother, mother, don't speak of him; you know how miserable it makes me."

"But, Marian, I've told you over and over again you'd be much wiser to make the best of it. What can it matter in the long run which you marry? What if things don't go quite to the ideas in your head, your head's on your shoulders all the same! otherwise, I should have lost mine long ago! Custom's everything. For forty years nothing has gone on as I should have liked it, so that it would be folly in me now to expect this affair to be just to my liking. I could have looked forward pleasantly enough to living with you at Liebwyl after your father's death. I feel pretty sure you'd have made me comfortable. But it's no use setting our hearts upon what we shall never get. Time, and a good cup of coffee now and then, go a great way towards consoling us for many things that at first we should have thought insupportable."

Such were the consolations that Marian received from her mother; but they were not very effective. Consolations are seldom appropriate to the character of the person they are meant to console; and for the most part it is impossible to tell beforehand whether they will act like water or like oil upon the fire. Some comforters have no real faith whatever in the arguments they adduce; while others reason just according to what would suit their own constitution of mind, and not yours.

These words of Marian's mother, for instance, made no impression whatever upon her. As for consoling Andrew, the speaker never for a moment believed that a young man like him would break his heart because he could not have the very first girl he had taken a fancy to. Her uppermost thought as to him was, how quickly she could get him out of the way. Andrew, however, was not at all inclined to leave. Seated by Marian, he made slow progress with his dinner, in spite of her mother's exhortations. The same cup of coffee remained before him untasted, and he had hardly touched the omelette; when the case becoming urgent, Marian's mother called to her:

"Here they are, going back to the fields again; and what'll your father say if he doesn't see you with them? He'll be sure to turn in there on his way home."

But Marian never stirred. "After all, mother," she replied, "it'll only be one more scolding; and one more or one less doesn't signify. But the fact is, I can't go on much longer this way, between life and death; and I should like to ask my father whether he really thinks he has a right to dispose of me just as he pleases, whether I will or no."

"What! and you really propose to question your father that way! Beware, I implore you!"

"Yes, mother; because I think that a great deal depends upon how much courage and resolution I

show. You know if once a girl is resolute, all the taunts and threats in the world can't compel her to sacrifice herself. If it came to that, I should run away, and I know where I should go."

Her mother was petrified. She too had for the last few moments neglected her dinner. She trembled at the thought of what she would have to bear if such a crisis should occur, she who had nowhere to go with the very smallest chance of being taken in.

She entreated her daughter to return to her work in the fields, and remarked to Andrew, that she supposed he did not want to get himself and them into a difficulty; and if so, that there was nothing for it but for him to set off at once. After all, if he did win her daughter it would be no very great conquest; it was the boys that would have the money, and Marian was nothing of a housekeeper. Such a young man as he could find a better wife any day; and if she were in his place she would certainly not take so much trouble for what would perhaps be of no advantage to him.

But as to Andrew also, she might as well have talked to the table; the more excited she became, the less they either of them listened to her, absorbed as they were in other reflections.

At last the old woman became positively angry, and stamping her foot, ordered him to begone, or she would not answer for the consequences.

Just at this juncture her husband appeared, and terrified beyond endurance his wife slipped out of the room.

"Ha! ha! fine doings here!" he exclaimed, and not exactly in anger. "When the cat's away the mice will play! Have you found him again, Marian, under a tree?"

"No!" answered Andrew for her this time; "I've come alone. My father and mother are growing old, and urge me to marry; but I've never felt at all disposed that way till now. In fact, I've come to ask if you'll give me your daughter. I think she'll be happy amongst us; we're comfortably off; our farm's a large one, and quite free from debts; besides which, we've laid by. We're three of us at home; and I'm the youngest son."

"Come! you don't beat about the bush, certainly. You come down upon us as though you imagined that I'd nothing to do but to say 'yes' immediately, and perhaps thank you into the bargain for the honour you've done me! But unfortunately this sort of thing is not to be settled quite so easily. What do you say, daughter, yes, or no."

"With all my heart, father; I don't know why we should refuse him."

"You don't know why? You don't know what has been arranged for you already? It seems you understand each other at any rate, and that I've

only to consent to what you choose to say! Come, come, this is something quite new!"

"No, father, it's not; indeed it's not so. I only want to tell you my mind at once. I've never meant to count upon anything without your consent. But I tell you again, I never will marry Keller."

"Why don't you give me a cup? or is there no coffee left?" her father interrupted, drawing to the table. "It's warm weather to-day." Thereupon he began to discuss all sorts of subjects; inquiring especially whether much cheese was made in their village, and about the pasture.

"But where's your mother? Tell her to bring me a glass of wine. I prefer it above everything after coffee. I've not had time to take anything to-day; I wanted to be back early."

His wife was outside, and took care to stay there till she saw Marian, and trembled at the summons as though she were going to be brought before a court of justice; but when she had heard the message she inquired eagerly, "Has he consented then? Is the thing settled?"

"He's said neither one thing nor the other: he treats it just as though it didn't concern him at all; and he talks of cheese and rennet till it's enough to make one turn into rennet one's self! I can't understand it."

"I think I can. I'm inclined to think some-

thing's happened between him and Keller. They both want to out-do each other, each fancying that the other doesn't perceive it. But your father must have caught scent of it, and he's not one to let himself fall to the ground between two stools."

"I don't know how it is, but it seems to me strange that marriage should need all this scheming and haggling. I believe it's this that drives many a poor girl with a proud spirit into what's wrong. It's almost proverbial now amongst peasant girls."

"Yes, very true; it's a wicked world."

"And even a girl that would be reasonable and discreet, in time may be driven to something desperate."

"Certainly," replied the mother, not at all understanding Marian's idea.

Inside all was so calm that she was completely amazed when she entered, carrying the wine, and found her husband conversing with Andrew; certainly not in a tone of equality, for he did not consider that he had equals; and in his way no one could be prouder than he. This opinion was based, not only upon his wealth, but upon his ability and shrewdness. He had won two or three lawsuits, and had once been very nearly made a magistrate; at least he had quite brought himself to the point of accepting. He was always ready with a hit against the parsons, with which he every Sunday

amused a little circle of workmen. In short, he recognised his equal in no one, and shunned every one to whom he must necessarily have shown a certain respect. Above all, he shunned the Presence before which every knee must bow. If there had been no God, he could not have acted differently! He always made it impressively felt in a conversation, that the speaker was addressing the Farmer of Dorngrüt. It would have been worth while to see him and Goethe meet some day at an inn, with a good dish of roast meat served for the two; the greatest and vainest of poets not knowing who the Farmer of Dorngrüt was, any more than the farmer knew anything about him! How they would have stared at each other! each exclaiming that his opposite neighbour was certainly imbecile!

When by accident he did meet any one who did not recognise him, which was rarely—for he seldom quitted his own domain—he would exclaim at the extraordinary occurrence, adding that he thought there was hardly a child in the Canton that did not know the Farmer of Dorngrüt.

Of course a young man of Andrew's age was immeasurably beneath him, and this Andrew was made to feel, as is usual in such cases, by sarcastic allusions and frequent contradictions. Andrew was modest, but independent, and did not flinch. He was on the watch throughout for an opportunity of

returning to the subject in hand, just as a cat stands by, looking out for the re-appearance of a mouse from its hiding-place.

"So then the farm will be yours eventually?"

"Certainly; and if you give me your daughter, you need have no anxiety as to her position."

"Humph! There's many a farm in your neighbourhood that I'd rather not possess, however little it may be encumbered with debts. I suppose your affairs are arranged, and so that you needn't make over much to the others?"

"No, nothing's arranged; but the others won't be exacting. They are very good and kind to me, and I may say they know that there'll still be one true Bernese farmer left. Our land is not quite so level as some, but at any rate none of it is very steep; and as to the farm-house, I don't think there are many so roomy."

"I find the last lot of planks I've bought has not arrived yet, and I'm short of two plots. Do you think you've that much to dispose of? I think you told me the other day that you sold wood?"

"We don't sell it usually; but if we can accommodate a neighbour we're always willing. I should think there would be plenty to spare just now in our timber yard. You've only to come and see."

"Then you do store it for sale?"

"Not exactly; but when we find a bit of the

forest in the way, or if the trees should be sickly, we cut them down in the winter, and saw the best parts into planks. My father always says one never knows what may happen, and that it's better to have a little spare wood ready to hand. If there's anything he detests, it's to have to rush about the country when anything's wanted."

"Precisely; so if you happen to have a plot of two-inch planks, and two plots of an inch and a half, but really of the very best, I may probably come over some day next week if I've a horse to spare."

"And welcome! we've all sorts and sizes: but now, about your daughter. I want to know, candidly, whether it would suit you?"

"Surely there's no such desperate hurry. We're not so anxious as all that to get her out of the way. We can talk it over perhaps when I see you next week."

Andrew had not made any very marked progress in spite of all his diplomacy. When he remarked that the sun was getting low, and that he'd a long journey before him, instead of inviting him to stay the night, they remarked that he would have no difficulty, as the moon would be up at ten o'clock.

Before starting he cordially invited the farmer to come and see them at Liebwyl, and to bring his wife and daughter, as they had never been there.

"Bah! I've no great notion of women seeing the world," he replied: "I've never been in the

habit of dragging them about with me, and I'm too old to begin now." Thereupon he escorted Andrew out into the road, carefully obviating all chance of his encountering the rest of the household.

It was only after he had seen him fairly off the premises that he ventured to return to the house and question his wife as to how "that fellow" had found his way there, what had been said before he arrived, and why she had made so much of him, feasting him as though he had been an accepted suitor. The poor woman excused herself as best she could, dwelling upon the loaf of sugar he had brought them—the coffee she passed over in silence —and remarking that after that she could hardly have done less. She added, that just then Marian had appeared, and had made a great fool of herself; and that she had done all she could to put an end to the interview.

Marian could not make out such a clear case: she flatly declared that Andrew knew she would accept no one but him; and that as for marrying Keller, that she never would, if the alternative were that she was to be roasted alive!

"We shall see," was all the reply.

Marian was bewildered, and remained so during the rest of the day, for it was not till the next morning that her mother could inform her how things had been proceeding between the two old men. Keller, it appeared, had consented to settle his fortune upon

Marian, and a meeting had been appointed at a certain fair, for the purpose of signing the contract; after which the banns were to be published: but instead of appearing there in person, Keller had sent a well-known cheat as his representative, who, instead of signing, began to haggle afresh, and argued that all this haste was most undesirable, and that it would be much better to let the banns be published first. This had enraged Marian's father to the degree that he declined to accept Keller's excuse for non-appearance—an acute pain in his back, which had kept him in bed—and sent word by his agent that he might now consider the matter between them at an end. He would listen to no remonstrances, and departed furious; exclaiming that his daughter was not so badly off as to wait for an old miser like Keller.

It appeared that on the day of Andrew's visit to Dorngrüt he had been seen by one of Marian's brothers, who had reported the circumstance to his father on returning to the fields. So Marian was informed by her mother, who was in ecstasy at the rebuff that had been dealt to Keller, and only hoped her husband would keep to it.

"I think he will," she continued; "he loves money, but he loves power still better, and the very last thing he could tolerate would be that anyone should get the better of him. He's a queer man," she concluded.

Marian listened with inexpressible joy and solemnity; she felt as though a mountain had been lifted from her heart, and heaven opened to her ravished eyes. And yet she was still obliged to wait, would it be days, hours, or weeks? and finally would she be allowed to enter there or no? This depended on the caprices of two covetous old men.

For a time her father seemed satisfied at the sight of Marian's increased cheerfulness, as it seemed tending to give him his own personal revenge for the late insult from Keller. But suppose the latter should come round after all, thought Marian, and make out that he had really been too ill to appear in person, and that his agent had misrepresented him! then the old misery would return again. Or if her father should take her to Liebwyl, as he promised, and yet keep both her and them in the dark as to his intentions till he had secured the wood at a low price, and then announce that he would hear nothing more about the affair! At every knock at the door Marian started: if a cart passed by she dreaded lest it should be Keller arriving. Whenever her father went out she began to wander about the house full of fears, which were not to be allayed till he had returned, and she had settled in her own mind what the expression of his countenance betokened.

For some days her father had never once mentioned Keller, nor any of the parties concerned,

and Sunday was now come. It was not his habit, as we know, to go to church, but he turned his leisure to account for sundry and divers matters, especially for audiences with the neighbouring farmers.

This time all had gone on as usual, Marian trembling incessantly for fear of the dreaded arrival, when what was her emotion, on seeing her father, immediately after dinner, dressed in his best and brushing his hat, and finally setting out in the direction of a certain village, situate between Schulwyl and Aufbeghirge, one of Keller's favourite Sunday haunts.

Marian involuntarily set out after him, although in the time that it had taken her to get ready he had disappeared.

"I feel dreadfully anxious," she remarked to her mother; "I must get out a little."

"Only be back then in time to do your work," was the rejoinder; "for it's impossible to depend on servants, least of all on Sundays."

Marian took the direction she believed to be her father's, but without coming upon any trace of him. The road diverged in many places, and she took a turning at hazard. Soon she found herself approaching the village in which their church was situated, and she began to consider what she should do there, and where she should go next. If she met anyone, and said she had only

come out to take a walk, she would be stared at and disbelieved, so little is this the custom of peasant girls, who are seldom or never out without some pressing object; besides, it was so early, not at all a likely hour for going out with nothing to do.

All at once the church bell began to ring for the children's service, which it had never happened to her to be present at, since her course of religious instruction had ended with her first communion. It is not often, in fact, that there are any mere spectators; still Marian had often felt a hankering after these services, of which she retained a very welcome recollection, and more especially of the worthy pastor who had conducted them; and more than once she had expressed this to her mother, but had only been told that she had had abundant opportunities of learning already, and that everyone would wonder what she was there for.

In the present emergency Marian decided, that in case of being questioned, she would profess to have come over on account of one of their little shepherd girls being among the catechists, whose replies she was interested to hear.

The bell had ceased; the pastor had read the Psalm, and the organ was pealing, and at her entry the whole assembly of children began to stare at her in a way that almost made her regret having ventured.

While the music continued, her thoughts wandered after her father, and happening to notice the altar steps, she thought to herself, "Suppose I should one day find myself kneeling there by the side of the man I despise most in the whole world, and getting every moment nearer to the point where I must say Yes!"

At this moment her heart seemed positively to contract; she could hardly keep down the cry of "No! no! Oh! never, never, never!"

At last the organ ceased; but her oppression remained: it seemed as though her bodice, her necklace, everything, were too tight. Alas! it was her poor heart that was under such restraint!

The minister began to speak of the perpetual vicissitudes of life. Vicissitudes which are ever under the watchful eye of God; the point and gist of which is never apprehended by any one whose eye is not turned in the direction of God—such, at least, was the lesson deduced familiarly from a series of questions and answers between the minister and his young audience.

This carried Marian back to the days when she had been one of the quiet and respectful listeners, but had in her light-heartedness regarded the pastor's words pretty much as so many precious stones, which one reverently lays aside for want of knowing what to do with them. After all, it is only with time that the seed can germinate: it is

the experiences of life that unfold the Lord's lessons.

The first sounds of the catechising had transported Marian to her bygone happy childhood; but little by little her emotions had become more sombre, and the echo of experience testified to the truth of what she now heard, and awakened the most earnest instincts of her nature.

Yes! there had been nothing but sorrow and vexation in their house, because there no one's thoughts turned towards God. When there was a good harvest, no thanks were given to Him; there was only more eating and drinking at the harvest-home.

Great investigations were made into profits and losses, but what was God's will or wish was never once inquired.

Each member of the family was the enemy of the other, each thinking of his own advantage and of another's weaknesses, and never calling upon God to draw them into unison. Hence the utter dreariness of their interior. As to herself: had she regulated her life according to the declared Will of God, and sought his consolations under its sorrows? It is not enough to have faith; it must be the mainspring and inspiration of our whole existence. The majority of persons are too much like well-provided shopkeepers, who keep all their stores in their distinct places: their faith will be in one drawer, in another their

opinions, in another their principles, and in another their sentiments: as to their life, that is a thing quite apart, and always at their fingers' ends, far removed from all contact with feelings, faith, principles, or opinions.

When the price of sugar is going down in the market, it is sold liberally with good weight, for the faster it sells the greater the profit; but when it is rising, it becomes quite painful to sell it, because the longer it is kept the more profitable it becomes.

As Marian listened, all the good that had ever been instilled into her nature seemed to stir within her, like the leaves of a tree after a shower.

The last notes of the last hymn ended, the pastor pronounced the benediction, and the sacristan opened the door; whereupon Marian had to go out with the rest of the congregation, and certainly more reluctantly than any of them.

She was setting out at random, absorbed in thought, when she perceived that the woman at the grocer's shop was beckoning to her, and at the same moment two of her acquaintances presented themselves, and finally the landlady of the inn, who, when the other two had gone, took occasion to exhort Marian to hold resolutely to Andrew, assuring her that he was well worth it. As to Keller, she went on to say, she knew him well, and all that was said of him; adding, that if only

half of it were true, it was perfectly monstrous to think of any young girl being doomed to marry him. "As for myself," she concluded, "I'd rather marry any reptile you could name!"

She had no time for more, as other passers-by joined them; but it roused Marian to the utmost, and she began her homeward walk in the resolution that if she might not marry Andrew, it should positively end there; she would resign herself to God's mysterious will, and give up all her bright dreams of a pure and peaceful home, a home in which she felt she could love and be loved, respect and be respected, in fact live the life she so craved for.

At this point her meditations were interrupted by the noisy barking of one of their own dogs, and Marian halted now that her home was within sight, reflecting upon all the material wealth that it contained, and thinking how much good and happiness all this might procure in some circumstances; while in their case, if a conflagration were to destroy it all, they could hardly be poorer in very deed; nay, they would at least be quit of all the filth and dirt that had been allowed to accumulate.

"And yet," she reflected, "it had been by no mere chance that she came there; she might, but for God's will, have been the child of pauper parents, and in that case she would never have got

to know Andrew. Was it right for her to murmur, to feel so ungrateful? No; if God willed, she would give up Andrew; but she knew He could never approve of her consenting to marry his rival: she had never read anything in Scripture that could possibly sanction that.

The sun was setting, and Marian reached her home this time without feeling any very great concern as to how she would find her father, for our tremors and misgivings cease when once we have clearly made up our minds—the only thing being, whether this really is accomplished.

Mutz, the dog, ran to meet her, wagging his tail as soon as she was in sight: cur that he was, he had a grateful heart. For the rest, all was still and silent around the house, save for the cackling of the ducks and the bleating of some of the sheep behind their hurdles. The servants, as their mistress had augured, were still far off. The pigs grunted vociferously in evident recognition as she passed, and as she opened the house door, the grating of its hinges woke her mother, whose coughing became audible from the adjoining room. Who has not remarked, that in a house where the door creaks everything else is creaky?

"Is that you, Marian?" exclaimed her mother as she re-adjusted her cap. "What o'clock is it? It must be time to light the fire. Put the food for the pigs on, and our supper at the same time."

It was Marian's work to attend to the pigs for her mother, whose faithful adjutant she was, though she wore no uniform. While she was sweeping out the sty, her father came up. Marian's heart beat violently, how violently only those can imagine who have known a father's word explode like a bomb-shell in the midst of all their prospects.

"They're not amiss," he began, examining the pigs; "I've a good mind to let the butcher have two of them if he has ready money: the others may wait till Candlemass; they'll weigh over three hundred pounds by that time. And, by the by, if you'd like to go with me to-morrow to Berthould to see about it, mind you're ready by five o'clock."

Marian could hardly believe her ears. She could not be sure whether she was dancing, with the pigs around her, or whether she and the farm-house were floating about in the air. She had not come to herself even by the time her father had fed the horses, to the accompaniment of invectives against boys who never could be back by six o'clock—boys who had seen him set out early, and therefore had divined that he would not be back till late, and had acted accordingly.

Now the fact was that he had set out hoping to meet Keller as though by chance, and he had met him, but not to his satisfaction. Keller had appeared perfectly calm, and not in the least put out. He had held out his glass to him in sign of

welcome, and remarked that he had not been able to meet him the other day on account of the pain in his back, but that next week, if he had time, he would see about it. To this the Farmer of Dorngrüt had contented himself by replying, that he did not like making promises, as it was sometimes impossible to keep them; and then began to talk on indifferent subjects. When he had emptied his glass, he had risen to go in spite of Keller's remonstrances.

"No, I've business on hand," he had replied; "when a thing has to be arranged, there's nothing like seeing to it at once—delays are dangerous."

"What does he mean?" soliloquised Keller. "Nonsense; he's trying to urge me on, but I'm up to him."

Marian was so intoxicated with surprise and hope, that it was with some difficulty she announced the projected expedition to her mother; and when she had done so, it became evident that the latter was piqued at her daughter's having been invited instead of herself.

"Do, mother, go instead of me," pleaded Marian; "it's ever so long since you have been out of the house, and you've never been there before."

"Bah!" she replied; "if he wanted me he'd have told me so. I know very well he's ashamed of me. I wouldn't go now if he'd offer me twenty francs."

As she said, her husband was ashamed of her, and what he had once decided upon he never would swerve from: it suited him to be seen with a trim pretty daughter at his side, as it suited him to be seen driving a sound, well-conditioned horse. Every time he saw her noticed by the passers-by he exclaimed to himself, "Yes, no doubt; wouldn't you like to have her?" He could have enjoyed parading her all day, as a schoolboy will hold a tempting morsel before the lips of one after another of his companions, and delight to see the disappointment of all.

Marian had been so excited at the unexpected summons from her father, that she had spread confusion around her in the kitchen, and her mother had finally turned her out. She betook herself then to her own room, and turned out drawers and wardrobes; but when she had got all the things in order she perceived that she had put back all her best clothes into the press, leaving out her old ones. She did not intend to make herself smart, but she was resolved to be well and suitably dressed. To do this is not easy for a young girl who had never learnt the art in the usual way, by watching her mother. We might even say that there is hardly anything more difficult, when it has to be achieved, as it were by inspiration, in default of having contracted the habit. It is no slight praise to earn

the remark, "she always looks as though she had just come out of a band-box." It is something to dress always without either negligence or pretension: just a ribbon too much or a ribbon too little, or a chance tear, or a grease-spot, and one may easily be denounced as a slattern—a title probably earned by many a young girl who little thinks it: and who does not realize the unpleasant effect of a smart silk apron and dirty stockings appearing under it; a magnificent straw hat, and hat-strings that one would scarcely touch with the tongs, or fine openwork gold rings and black silk mittens on hands tipped with nails quite as black; or a gold chain—at any rate a gold-coloured chain—under unwashed ears; or smart fancy stockings and tattered shoes, out of which the heels peep curiously behind?

Yet this really is a difficulty, and a very serious one, to a young girl—setting out for the first time for the house of her betrothed, for future mothers-in-law have sharp eyes and critical judgments.

Now Marian was gifted with an instinct for what is suitable, and for what became her—that priceless good taste. Everything that she wore suited her. One could not have wished a single thing different from what it was, and this, in spite of her parents' mania for always buying her the most vulgar and flimsy things. More than once they had made her presents that had cost her secret tears, and yet for

which she had felt bound to thank them heartily; nay, more, she had felt obliged to wear these gifts; but always chose her occasions for doing so very discreetly, and put them aside directly she dared hope that they had been forgotten.

This will explain the extreme difficulty of her toilet on the present occasion.

This evening her mother was really put to it. Marian had completely deserted her; the servants had not returned, and she had been obliged to finish the work of the house herself, and to make all the necessary preparations for an expedition in which she was to have no part. It was well that the rest of the household were out of her reach, and that all her imprecations were in thought and not in deed, or more than one of the establishment might have been seen next morning hanging from the rafters among the flitches of bacon and bundles of herbs!

Marian did not easily fall asleep: her room felt insupportably hot; and when sleep approached anxiety came with it. She fancied at one time that she heard rain or thunder, and got up to look out of the window; then returned to bed again, hoping soon to drop off to sleep. This she did; but immediately awoke in alarm, calling out, "Stop, father; stop; we're going to upset!" only to find herself seated on the edge of her bed. Perceiving her mistake she once more ensconsed herself under

the bed-clothes, and slept audibly, but not long; for she soon awoke again, exclaiming, "Father, father, hold him in, he's got the bit in his teeth!" Again sleep, that gentle all-soothing friend, returned to quiet her fears. In youth it is mostly so; but as years advance, and our time for reflection ebbs away, sleep abstains from stealing it from us, and the night-watches ought often to serve for solemn intercourse with Heaven.

A third time then, sleep revisited Marian, and this time presented her with scenes and images which, instead of alarming her, lulled her into a delicious ecstasy: her brow relaxed, and a joyous smile played about her lips, sweet as the fragrance from the rose.

Day had dawned brightly without breaking her rest. The sun's rays seemed to stream in surprise on the fair girl whom they could not waken; serving only to illumine her dreams, and to gild in advance what was to be the brightest day of her life. But, as it is the finest days that generally end with a storm, so, in the midst of her happy dreams, the harsh voice of her mother resounded with, "Now then, if you're going it's quite time you should be up! think of sleeping to the last moment, and leaving everything on my hands!"

At this Marian bounded out of bed, as a horse on the battle-field bounds when a bomb explodes near him, and found herself standing in the middle

of her little room, without knowing exactly where she was; till at last she perceived the daylight streaming in at her window, and her best clothes spread out upon the chairs and tables.

"To think," she exclaimed, "that I should oversleep myself when I meant to be up so soon!" Then calling to her mother that she would be ready directly, she set about her preparations.

It was no joke to have an appointment with the Farmer of Dorngrüt. Marian knew that he never waited, and she dressed as though by magic. True, a moist heat stood upon her face, especially when she had forced herself to drink her coffee almost boiling, for her father was already at the door with his whip in his hand, and announced that he was going, and that whoever was going with him must come at once. Let him once be in his seat and pronounce the decisive "Hue," and those who were not ready might run after him or stay at home, which they pleased. This was such an understood thing that those he lived with had learned to bestir themselves.

It is really wonderful to see the celerity of young girls when they are bent upon being ready. As to Marian, she had forgotten neither her pocket nor her pocket-handkerchief, nor her bracelets nor her mittens—though these last were drawn on only after she had settled herself into her seat, and she had only done so one instant before the "Hue"

issued from her father's lips. Her mother, in spite of her mortification, came to the door to see them off and look after them, expecting some amicable salutation or other from her husband at the last.

"Mind you finish pulling out the flax to-day and spreading it on the grass; let it be finished by the time I get back, you understand. Hue, Kohli." And after a little floundering, Kohli darted off furious.

"Vicious brute!" muttered the old woman, as she turned into the kitchen.

Query—Did she allude to the horse, or to her husband?

PART V.

It was a magnificent morning on which the father and daughter set out from Dorngrüt. The sun was shining in all its splendour; the air was clear, the earth glistened, and Kohli very soon settled into a peaceable trot.

There is an inexpressible charm in setting out in the early morning in quest of happiness.

Many a soldier has felt—as perhaps his prancing and curveting steed has felt under him—overflowings of strength to assail and overwhelm the enemy as he has set out gaily at break of day. This has surely been the experience of many a Swiss Carabineer as he has set off for the first time in his green uniform and amid the cheers of his comrades. But, arrived at the field of honour, perhaps he would gladly have paused a little. However, time presses, he takes a draught from his wine-flask to fortify himself, and yet the carbine trembles in his hand, and the ball flies he hardly knows how or whither.

Imagine the agitation of the heart of a young girl who feels herself on the brink of what she has

been yearning for with her whole soul! The soldier on the field of battle has only to trust in his strength of arm, in his weapon, and in his God; but how much more painful and uncertain the fate of a young girl, seated beside a wilful and unreasonable father, and on her way for the first time to the home of her beloved, whose father, mother, brothers, and sisters have probably each their respective ideas, any or all of which may come between her happiness and her!

Her father scarcely opened his lips; he was thinking of the planks he meant to buy. Marian spoke even less; her errand was even more absorbing. At times Kohli seemed to her to go so slowly that she could hardly repress the "Hue" that would rise to her lips. Then again he seemed to go so fast that she longed to beg her father to keep him back.

Suddenly they stopped.

"Dear me! where are we?" exclaimed Marian, afraid lest they had already reached their goal.

"We're at Herlingen," replied her father, giving the reins to the stable boy: "take the horse out, and give him a feed."

And now Marian understood that she must get down, and that Liebwyl must be somewhere near. Her father followed the horse to the stable, and Marian stood waiting between the cart and the inn, not knowing what better to do, till the servant

came out and asked whether she would not walk inside. This she declined, answering that she would wait and see what her father wished. Soon it appeared that he had determined to go in—whereupon Marian followed him; and the landlady, who knew the farmer well, seemed enchanted to see him, and inquired what good luck had brought him there, where he showed himself so seldom.

"I've come to look for some planks," he replied in a familiar tone; "perhaps you could tell me where I might be likely to meet with some good and cheap."

"Why, just at present that's not easy—wood's scarce; and what we have it's so difficult to get the sawyers to cut up: they'll hardly work now, except for the trade. It's no use their coming at last when the wood's becoming wormeaten. Yes, planks are very dear just now; but you might happen to find some at the Taubloch timber-yard."

"Is that far off?"

"Somewhere about half a mile."

"I think I've heard say that the farmer at Liebwyl has a stock."

"That may be; but not for sale. He never parts with them except now and then as a favour. Do you know him?"

"No. His son came off worst at a fight the night of the fire at Aufbeghirge, and was left for dead till our people brought him to our house.

He happened to mention that whenever we were in want of anything we should be able to get it from them as likely as not: but I know what it means when people are willing to oblige you. You can't bargain, and if they can fleece you they will."

"Nay, nay; that's not their way. If their son told you so, you'll get what you want better there, and cheaper too, than anywhere else. They're the sort of folk that the world wants more of. I can answer for it, because I always buy their calves from them. They never ask more than the fair price; and when they buy they never beat down. You may buy their pigs from them by weight without any fear of finding that they'd had a feed of cherry-stones just at the last! I don't know another farm where you can feel safe: they cheat you right and left, every day worse; and the more they cheat you the less credit they'll allow, as though one were as bad as themselves."

"And are they rich?"

"I should just think so. They're people of the good old sort: they're not likely to find their cash run out if they happen to have spent eight or ten pounds on an occasion, nor to be out of milk in the dairy if a cup of coffee should be wanted for a chance visitor."

"Oh! for that matter they're no such great exceptions; but I dare say that's the kind of farmer that innkeepers like best to deal with."

"Yes, that it is; and if you'll take my advice you'll deal with them too. You'll not repent it."

"I've no objection; but I think I'll just call at the timber yard on my way; that is, if it's not much out of the way."

"Not much: the roads separate over yonder, near that red house, and you must come back to it again before you can go on to Liebwyl."

Arrived near the house in question, the Farmer of Dorngrüt accosted his daughter with,

"Now then, you may go on to Liebwyl: they might chance to be out, and then I should lose my time in waiting; but you can look them up, for we must be back to-night, and we've a long way to go." Thereupon he took the road to the left, leaving Marian utterly overwhelmed.

If there had only been an available hole she would instinctively have craved to hide herself in it till her father's return; but as this was impossible, and as there was no escape, she reluctantly turned to the right.

Marian was not what would be called shy. As daughter of the Farmer of Dorngrüt she could speak or knock at a door without stammering or blushing; but there is another and a more intense shyness, which is not evinced on the surface, and which, consequently, is not often believed in—an indefinable impulse, which makes a person afraid of disturbing another, of being burdensome or in the

way: afraid of entering into communication with a stranger or of making known one's characteristics or emotions all at once to another. Men sometimes carry this form of shyness with them to their graves; and so do many women, concealing it meanwhile as their most secret self; but it's most frequent haunt is in the heart of a young girl, where it is located more inaccessibly the more solemn and critical the impending moment. It is true, that under the pressure of grief, anxiety, and love, Marian had allowed Andrew to read her heart genuinely, without concealment or pretence, but then she had been as it were the instrument of saving his life, and this had given him the key to her heart. Here she was, however, ordered to present herself alone at a house in which she had never set foot. She would have to knock at the door, perhaps to enter into a long explanation as to who she was. She did not know what Andrew might have said about her; she did not know anything of their ways or tastes, so that she had nothing to guide her as to how to act. What if she should go by mistake to the wrong house, and be laughed at! or suppose there should be a savage dog about, like theirs at Dorngrüt!

As she pondered all these possibilities, she walked painfully along a narrow lane bordered on each side by a quickset hedge, when all at once she thought she heard the sound of a scythe

behind it, and next, some one remarked to another:

"Nonsense; they'll not come to-day, or they'd have been here long ago." To which another voice, which she knew very well, replied:

"I'm not at all sure of that; they've a long way to come."

"Well, the less you expect it the better. My belief is, that they just threw this promise after you as a sort of civility in parting, or why should the old man have looked so black after you as he did? My good fellow, you're just like the goose in the fable. I'd bet anything that the old man has had the banns published already."

"Not a bit of it. She's quite incapable of such a thing; and besides, she'd have been sure to let me know."

"No, no; trust to me on that point: when once a wedding's decided upon, they're all alike. However they may have protested beforehand, they always give in just at the right time."

"But I don't believe that they are all alike; there are girls of all sorts, and young men too. How would you like to be put on a par with some that I could mention?"

"Well, then, she must be very unlike the rest; and if she's not like them, what is she like, I wonder? I should vastly like to see her."

"Wait till you do see her, and I'll answer for it

you'll come round to my opinion. However, she's tall—about as tall as our mother, without being a may-pole. She has a fine skin, without very much colour; she has very thick plaits of hair, black eyes, and very white teeth. When she opens her mouth, it's like opening the gates of Paradise; and when she looks at you softly, as she does sometimes, it's enough to make you melt away. But generally she looks at you seriously, or at least as though she were going to ask you a question. Her hands show that they're used to work, and that they're washed many times a day."

"And have you ever seen her in a passion?"

"I once made her very angry at Aufbeghirge; but as soon as I apologised it was all over."

"Well, if that's the case, take my advice, and don't plunge into it rashly. For my part, I never would marry a girl without having seen her in a passion; but then it must be a real, downright passion, as though she'd never be calm again. And if chance didn't furnish me with the occasion, I'd contrive to provoke her to the degree that she'd be ready to swallow me!"

"What an idea! and whatever for?"

"Why, I always feel I wish to know how they'll look when they're angry. Now, I'll tell you a secret. I was once very near being engaged to a girl you would have thought was made all of silk and velvet, and as sweet as a gingerbread; yes,

and incapable of troubling calm waters, or of looking with anything but loving eyes. As for her voice, it was as silvery as a flute. I couldn't rest all day for impatience to go and see her in the evening. One evening I went, intending to have a dance with her, and as she didn't come for a long time, I took a turn with some one else; and when the dance was over, and I was calling for some refreshment to offer my partner, in came the girl I'd been expecting. Whether she'd been watching us I don't know, but certain it is, that she looked as though her eyes would dart out of her head. She would have nothing to say to me. She first wandered about the room like a wasp on a window-pane; and then, to insult me, ordered supper for herself and the servant-girl she'd brought with her, and finally, set out in great haste, looking furious. I ran after her, and overtook her near her home. I made every possible protestation, and no end of apologies; but I saw then what she was like when she was angry. Her face became ten times blacker than it had been at the inn; she held her head in the air, and rolled her eyes like the wheels of a cart, and opened her mouth to its very widest, pouring out of it a torrent of vengeance.

"All the love I had felt for her turned into utter disgust. I said to myself, that a mad cat was less vicious than a woman like that: and I took to my heels, only afraid lest she should be running after

me. Indeed I didn't dare to look round till I was at home and safe in bed. I felt then just as though I'd had an escape from drowning, or as though a heavy waggon had driven over me; and when I got up next morning, I vowed that I'd never marry, or at any rate not till I'd put the girl to the proof. It's really absurd how we coax and wheedle them, and almost go on our knees to know what's the matter if they so much as look displeased. Why, how could they be angry in this case—and so it goes on, till the thing's finished: and it's only then we know what they really are; and then begin reproaches, and quarrels, and each party thinks itself taken in. Think what would have become of me, the day I've mentioned, if I'd been married then. So take care; this charming girl of yours might prove a very different creature if you'd made her angry—red-hot."

And Felix, who hurled a forkful of clover on the top of the cart as he ended his exhortation, suddenly stood staring as though he were petrified, for behind the hedge he had just caught sight of a pair of young black eyes fixed intently upon him.

"Good day; and now what do you think of me?" inquired the young girl, with a mischievous smile upon her face, Felix meanwhile looking like a lump of butter under a hot sun: and who knows how long he would have stood thus transfixed if

Andrew had not come to the rescue at the well-known sound of Marian's voice?

Hearing that it was she they were speaking about, her impulse had been, not to listen, but simply to show herself; but then she had not ventured to interrupt Felix, and so it had happened that she had stood stock still till he perceived her.

"Oh! welcome, welcome, good day!" exclaimed Andrew; "this is good of you;" and immediately, all the gravity that overspread her face while Felix had been gazing at her disappeared.

"So you're not to trust in any one any longer!" she exclaimed, looking deliciously arch. "Father wished me to come with him. He's getting old, and I fancy he doesn't like going far quite alone."

And now Felix came forward, shaking her warmly by the hand, and hoping she would not think anything of what she had overheard him say, for really he had been talking great nonsense, more to amuse Andrew than anything else.

"But now let us come home," he added; "it's getting late."

From the field to the farm-house there were no intervening houses. It was situated in the midst of a wide-spreading orchard; and around it were neither straw, nor heaps of wood; everything was straight and trim, and had a bright, festal air. The windows were gay with flower-pots; and an old dog that had been dozing on the wide sunny

terrace roused himself and went to meet them, wagging his tail, but without barking. Christian was prowling about among the cattle sheds, Anna was sorting in the granary, while Annette, who was washing the milk-pails at the fountain, was the first to see the party approaching—Felix and the clover cart in front, followed by Marian and Andrew. She threw down her milk-pails abruptly, darted in at the back door and out at the front, and called out to her mother almost breathlessly:

"Mother, they're coming, hey! make haste!" returning to the house so quickly that she had no time to hear Anna's reply:

"Really, Annette, will you never remember how I dislike this sort of thing? What will she think of us!"

And this superb woman advanced with a cordial demeanour to meet Marian, bidding her welcome, and telling her how much she had been wishing to see her, and how happy she would be if she should feel disposed to come and live among them.

Annette was at the front door again already, but with a clean apron and sundry other little additions to her dress, and was gazing at the approaching group so intently, that she almost forgot to say "How do you do?" But of course it is all-important for one young girl who encounters another for the first time to examine the latter in every item of her appearance. She cannot pause

till she has perceived the colour and quality of her dress, and how it is trimmed. Whatever good feeling may exist underneath, there is nevertheless an emotion of rivalry, such as two combatants will entertain as they shake hands before beginning to fight. Fortunately they are most prone to decide, each of them, that they undoubtedly have the advantage; but there is generally some one article of dress possessed by one and not by the other which attracts the notice of one, and decides her that, come what will, she must positively have a bodice, or a scarf, or a necklace, or whatever it may be, precisely similar!

How this was in the present instance I cannot say; but unquestionably each felt, when they had time to form an opinion, that the other was prettier and sweeter looking than herself, for they soon became decidedly friendly.

And this verdict was correct; for all depended upon the point of view from which the question was regarded. To any one of an aristocratic turn of mind, Marian was the loveliest, inasmuch as she was the more slender and graceful, and with the more finished features. Others, however, would prefer Annette for her greater piquancy, plumpness, and a certain moral and physical freshness peculiar to her.

Marian was struck with the cleanliness of the kitchen, and its spaciousness and beauty: there

was nothing like it in their house; and when her eye had caught a glimpse of the garden through the open door, and the fields beyond and the distant meadows, in the midst of which the house they were sitting in rose so clear and light and large, she came to the conclusion that she had never beheld so beautiful a farm, and her heart beat violently as she thought, "How happy one might be here!" And yet she felt oppressed, ill at ease, and with that undefined feeling that comes over us sometimes in a morning when we feel that there will be a storm before night.

Everyone was so kind and cordial; everything so charmed and delighted her! Coffee was served—such coffee as she had never tasted at home—with cheese and with bread; and everyone found time to stay with her without the least trace of annoyance as to losing valuable time in paying attentions to a young girl like her. She felt that the tone of things was quite different from what it was with them—a tone rarely met with in the Canton de Vaud; a tone made up of cordiality and esteem developed into a second nature, and habitual between parents and children, brothers and sisters, equally whether they are alone or whether strangers are present. If parents wish their children to be respected, they must respect them themselves, and treat them respectfully whether alone or amongst others; but in many households, when strangers

are present, parents and children seem to like to show how little account they make of each other; and the same between husband and wife and brothers and sisters. The result to themselves is just the opposite of what they would wish, for it only makes them appear small where they would be great, and brings down upon them the contempt they evince to their own people.

This had been Marian's experience. Her father had always snubbed her, and her mother and brothers doubly when any one was by: her brothers followed their father's example, and everything went contrary to the commonest rules of politeness, so that she perceived the contrast immediately, and foresaw what an anomaly her father's arrival would occasion.

Internal sensations are often reflected externally in a strange fashion! Humility takes the aspect of pride, dejection looks like contempt or discontent, etc., and the more Marian was overwhelmed by this feeling of superiority, the less she felt capable of throwing it off, and the more depressed she became. Andrew, who saw all that Marian felt, was on thorns, inasmuch as he did not understand it; and made all sorts of efforts to show off Marian to better advantage, but in vain. We have all of us, some time or other, known what it is to have to bring forward some one we very dearly love; to count upon their creating a most favour-

able impression, and upon our hearing unqualified praise of them afterwards; and we perhaps know by experience the emotions of a mother, whose child has become uproarious on some such occasion, and has had to be ignominiously hurried out of the room.

This is a mere nothing, however, in comparison with the situation of a lover who for the first time presents the girl of his choice to his parents. He hopes and expects that they will find her amiability incarnate, and welcome her like an angel from heaven. He is devoured by anxiety; now watching his beloved, and now his parents. Sometimes things seem going wrong on their side, and sometimes on hers, and he tries to put them right; with this he gets into such a feverish state that he is quite unlike himself, and at last he is pretty much in the condition of an impatient weaver, harassed by an entangled skein of thread.

It was not quite so bad as this with Andrew, for he was of a dignified character; but he mentally suffered. His Marian was so odd, so silent, so stiff, that he hardly knew her again; he began to fear he must have offended her, or that the words Felix had spoken must be rankling in her heart. He became more assiduous, and Marian was conscious of this: nevertheless it became more and more as though some one had seized her by the throat and she could not utter a sound. Andrew

was in despair, when the arrival of Marian's father seemed likely to cause a diversion; but in reality it only added tenfold to Marian's misery. Though she mistrusted herself and her own deportment, she felt irresistibly prompted to tell her father what he ought to say and do. If Andrew was on thorns, she sat on burning cinders in comparison. As for her father, however, he seemed perfectly self-possessed: he ate and drank with all the ease imaginable, and twice as much as usual—as it was not at his expense. Finding the planks so cheap, he had bought twice the quantity he had intended, and now that he was about it he bethought him that it would be a good opportunity for buying cows and horses at half-price, if possible; but Christian no sooner perceived this than he remarked, that he had no idea of parting with any of his horses, as he had a good deal of ploughing and sowing before him: also, that they used so much milk in the house that he should certainly not sell any of his cows. Still, as there happened to be a remarkably fine young heifer, equally unserviceable for the plough as for milking, and totally useless for some time, save to eat and drink, there was no excuse to offer for withholding it, and he was wheedled out of it for at least three pounds less than its real value. Everyone saw through it perfectly, but without appearing to do so, except the Farmer of Dorngrüt himself, who smiled in his sleeve, remarking to

himself that it was always so, the more assurance the better success.

Marian had not assisted at this bargaining: she at the time was taking a turn in the garden with Annette. When she proposed to herself to reproach her father with his extortion on returning home, something told her that "say what you will it's of no manner of use. You know very well that nothing comes of shaking a pear-tree unless the pears are ripe!"

And so the morning passed. At noon everyone met in the general room at a table served as no table had ever been served at Dorngrüt. A pretty and inviting dinner, not one of your repasts of salt meat and smoked sausages, and dried apples and pears. There was roast meat, and entrées afterwards, although it was neither a wedding nor a christening; and Marian was perfectly wrapt in astonishment, and sat wondering how in the world she would ever be able to manage things in this way. "They evidently must be very well off to entertain people like this," she said to herself at intervals of indignation at her father for eating so enormously. The more he ate, the less appetite she had, so that everyone was concerned, and protested that if they had only known of their coming they would have prepared better, adding that they hoped to do better another time. This was sheer agony to Marian: she tasted and tasted her food,

without being able to swallow it, and she handled her knife and fork as though she were plucking up nettles without gloves on. It so distressed Anna that she could not refrain from inquiring from Andrew, as he happened to pass close by her into the kitchen, what she could have done to make the poor girl so uncomfortable, and unable to eat.

"Nothing, mother, I'm quite sure of that; but perhaps she's upset with her long drive. I know it is so with some people."

This was the most plausible excuse Andrew could furnish impromptu, but it was far from satisfactory to himself.

Nothing had been said about the question at issue, but at last, when the business of eating was over, and wine was brought, which was praised as it justly deserved, Christian—not before he had had several significant looks from Anna—began thus:—

"By-the-by, how is it to be about that matter we discussed together the other day? If you're willing, we're quite agreeable. We're getting into years, and I feel I should like to know how things are likely to go on after us. We've often urged our son there to look out for a wife, but he never could find one to his mind till he met with this daughter of yours, and now he's quite bent upon having her. I don't want to boast, but it seems to me that if they were to join hands, they might suit each other

very well, and they'd begin life with very fair prospects."

Before he got so far as this Anna had more than once to wipe her eyes. Felix had gone out, and Annette also: Andrew and Marian said nothing. As to the person addressed, he waited, to make an end of a large slice of ham, and at last replied:

"It wasn't exactly on that business that I came to-day. If I'd known that you were so eager for it, I'm not sure that I should have cared to come and see about your planks. However, I've nothing against you: as to position, and family, we can't all have that; and as to fortune, we might see; but then you're a long way off from us, and a father doesn't like to trust his child to such a distance. One might never know how she was treated. I can bear a good deal, but let anyone hurt one of my children, and I wouldn't answer for myself."

"Oh! father, what an untruth!" inwardly groaned Marian, but without raising her eyes.

"Of course I know it must end in giving away one's daughters, but I'm not clear yet that it's my duty to give her to you. If I'd chosen to give her up to the first comer, she might have been a grandmother by this time."

"I quite agree with you," replied Anna, "that a daughter's safety and happiness should be the very first consideration; but of this I can honestly say, that I really think there can be no doubt. It

seems, indeed, to me, that God has kept her expressly for our Andrew. You've only to make inquiries to ascertain how we stand with our neighbours, and for my part I've always resolved, with God's help, to love and cherish a daughter-in-law and take her to my heart like my own. You need never fear she would be ill-treated here."

"Bah! I don't see what God has to do with it; it's simply whether I wish the marriage for my daughter or no. I may, or I may not. We're in no hurry to get rid of her. True, it's about time to think of a settlement for her, but there's always food enough and work enough for her at home. The great thing is, what you mean to do for your son. When you've told me that, I may be able to consider about it."

"Oh! for that matter I think we shall be able to satisfy you," replied Christian. "Andrew is the youngest, so that he will take the farm, and make it up fairly to his brother and sister."

"Ah! but that may mean anything. I've no notion of younger sons paying away all that comes to them; it's a mere farce, and it's certain to end in a lawsuit. No, no, my idea is that everything should be signed and sealed on delivery, and then there's no dispute."

"Nay, that's hardly necessary with us; it would only be a useless expense. The farm naturally falls to the youngest—there's no disputing that;

and it's quite certain that no one in our family would expect to be paid out of it over and above. It's well it is the custom in our Canton for the farm to remain intact: it would be all over with us if there were to be division and subdivision, as I hear is the way in a country called Ireland. It seems to go from one to another there, like the swinging of a bell. Thank God, we've not got to that: our farms are not cut up into shreds; they hold together so that a respectable family can get a living out of them, and quarrels among the elder children don't happen: they all take the same interest in seeing the old place kept up; it's a home or a rallying point for them all. Of course all debts and obligations of the fathers fall in with the farm, and indeed all the liabilities of the family down to the grandchildren, and even to the godchildren, for they consider themselves as part of the family, even after their sponsors are dead."

"Ah! well that's all very fine; and it's very much to be wished that it were so everywhere: but as one never knows what may happen, it's my opinion that you'd do very much better to sell the farm out and out to your youngest son during your lifetime. What is it worth?"

"Well, really I can hardly say. I remember my late father saying, that between brothers and sisters it was worth about twenty thousand pounds: but then I've added to it since those days, and the

land has become richer. Who knows what it might be valued at now, especially if it should be valued in detail?"

"Of course. However, say you let him have it for twelve, or possibly ten thousand, because of course he'd have all the debts with it. I shouldn't at all like the idea of his paying shares out of it: a clear sale is far more satisfactory."

"As to debts, he won't be much troubled with them, especially as there are coupons lying by into the bargain; besides, the stock is no trifle, and there's abundance of wood that might be cut if required. It's never been my way to make everything out of my farm in my time at the expense of those who come after me. I know some people do it."

"Oh! if there are coupons, that's a good thing. It might be well to dispose of the most available. Of course these would be his. It needn't be talked about; or if any inquiries should be made, you might say that the money was part of the dowry. At any rate, leave that to me; anyone who wants to know may come to me to be answered: I'll see to that."

Here Anna sighed deeply.

"But," interposed Christian, "it seems to me this would not be at all necessary. If Andrew takes the farm, at say eighteen or twenty thousand pounds, everyone will be content, and he'll have a good third. While if he should come in for debts,

he can cut down the timber, and it'll more than cover them. My wife's dowry has never been touched, and there it is, and something with it; so that Andrew is never likely to want his wife's to pay his own or his father's debts. As things are selling just now, he'll soon have made up the price of the farm, ready for his coming into possession. But I've no notion of fleecing my own children in my old age. I'll never let them have to reproach me with bringing them to want. I've always repudiated the idea of leaving almost everything to one of them, and a miserable pittance to the others. I firmly believe, that one pound wrongly come by, devours ten; I believe we see examples of it every day. No! I'll have nothing of that kind. If my children had been more numerous, or if Felix had wished to marry, I shouldn't have thought it right to keep them on at the farm, spending their best years in working it for their younger brother. I should have liked to set them up for themselves. A young man shouldn't stay on his father's farm till he's forty, and have to turn out of it then. He should go out into the world while he can look forward to coming back from it: let him once grow stiff and old at the old home, and it's a poor look-out; he'll end his days there, as likely as not, as a mere encumbrance. That's how it is. Andrew shall have his due, but no more; we love him too

much for that; moreover, we shouldn't like to have it on our conscience at the last."

"Nonsense, what a question you make of it!" replied his guest. "Surely everyone's free to say what he thinks, and to do what he pleases with his own. On that point my mind's quite clear. I'm not going to give my daughter to the first farmer's son that offers, especially if the young man's fortune's crippled with debts."

"Nay, don't take offence," Anna broke in; "Christian's not going to be unreasonable: he merely wishes you to understand his views; and as to debts, that's the very last thing that Andrew's likely to suffer from. I know very well that if he took the farm at twenty thousand pounds, he wouldn't have to pay more than five or six thousand for what's owing. The wood alone would pay nearly that. He's the very last person to remain in debt, and I think few young men would begin life so well to do as he would. Besides, all's not said yet; you mustn't forget that. They're not married, and for anything we know they never may be."

"Come, what say you?" she continued, turning to Marian.

If a cannon had been fired, Marian could not have been more startled. She had trembled throughout the whole discussion, and to her eyes, which did not read the hearts of any of the speakers, the

issue of the controversy seemed to become more and more obscure. When she suddenly found herself appealed to, she dreaded lest anything she might say should only complicate the affair; so she thought it safest to answer that she would accept their decision, whatever it should be.

The poor girl did not reflect that sometimes a brave word bravely spoken is worth a hundred submissive answers; and indeed, how many people forget this, without being in Marian's painful position! If she had had her way, she would certainly have wished nothing so much as that her father would leave money matters alone, and trust to the honour of these worthy people, not to speak of committing her case to God. She would have answered, that she would have been content with anything so that she might but exchange Dorngrüt for Liebwyl; but she was afraid of making her father only more irritable, and as she was decidedly too right-minded to support his demands, she satisfied neither party: more than that, her answer positively hurt the feelings of Christian and his wife.

"Now then, Andrew," inquired Christian, in his turn, "what have you to say? You are the person most interested. I believe what I have proposed would meet your views, as it's your interests that I've principally had in view."

"Indeed, father," replied Andrew, "I can only

say, that I sincerely love Marian. I believe she'd be a wife something like my mother; and as to being badly treated, that I can answer for it she never shall. It's because of all this that I've never once thought of asking what she'll have. I would have her just as gladly if she'd nothing at all; so that perhaps that's some reason why they're so anxious to know my expectations. For the rest, I'm perfectly agreeable to any arrangement that's just in itself; only my brothers and sisters *are* my brothers and sisters, and I won't see them wronged."

"For my part," interposed the Peasant of Dorngrüt, "I've always considered that one's skin is closer to us than the shirt we wear, so that in questions of marriage it's no use considering about brothers and sisters; but, as you please: this is not the business I came about. I intend that my daughter should marry well, and that's the long and short of it. If she does marry, as I suppose she will, there are lots of young men in our own neighbourhood for us to choose from: then at any rate we should know all about them, and have the affair under our own eyes, and there's a great deal in that. There's at least one person who's been bent upon it for a long time, and who would be an excellent match for her. I know she objects that he's too old, but in the end she'll understand that the older the better. I don't distress myself about that, though girls are sometimes a long time before

their eyes are opened. But now, if we're to get back to-day, it's time we should be off."

"No, not yet," said Christian, "we mustn't let the affair end that way. We only want to do what's right, and it's necessary to explain matters. I sincerely love my boy, and a thousand pounds more or less shall never stand in the way of his happiness. When two young people really love each other, money should never come between them. The girl pleases us, and we've nothing to say against her, though we know but little of her; and as a rule it's better that these attachments should spring up amongst friends than strangers." "As you say, we are rather far off, but that has its advantages on one side: relations often complain of being too near. I suppose, though mountains can't go to meet each other, human beings can; and when they meet seldom they don't meet so hurriedly. So now let us talk the matter well over. How do you feel about it? Let us arrange it if possible."

"Marian, what say you?" inquired her father. "It's your affair: come, speak out."

Marian was past speaking: her heart had been so tortured that she felt like a gambler who has staked his remaining all upon his last card, and is following with a frantic eye the hand of the banker. Every word increased her anguish. Every word irritated her more and more against the speaker, inasmuch as it seemed each time rather to retard than

advance the conclusion. She felt almost as though she would give anything in the whole world for it to end, no matter how. They may re-consider it after, she repeated to herself. Her father was too headstrong for her to hope anything from him; and as to the others, whom she exclusively looked to, they did nothing but hesitate. She felt especially provoked with Andrew. It seemed to her that if he really loved her, he would accept any conditions, trusting to their being modified, if need be, by and by.

"I didn't expect so many difficulties," she answered at last, "after what had been told me. Anyhow, I won't interfere; my father must arrange for me as he pleases. I hate to be bargained for; and to tell the truth, I am heartily sorry that it's come to this."

"That's just what I feel," remarked her father: "but now, if you must have my conditions, you must relinquish the farm to the boy at a valuation of from six to seven thousand pounds, and, once married, my daughter shall undertake the housekeeping; and if your son should die without children, she must inherit the farm absolutely; so now, yes, or no?"

At these words Andrew turned deadly pale. He moved his lips as though he wished to speak, but he had lost all power to utter a word. He felt the rising of a something venomous in his heart which he had never experienced before.

Did they think then that they had come from their out-of-the-way village to treat with idiots? Had the girl herself not a spark of love for him? Did she think of nothing but the business part of the transaction, while he claimed nothing, and never even so much as asked about her dowry? Was it just that everything was to be expected on his side? Was he a goose that needed to be gilded before anyone would have him? On the contrary, he had begun to feel that he, Andrew, was the equal of anyone in the community; and that his *I*, his personal individual self, was worth many an other's, with some thousands of pounds thrown into the scale. Alas! he little thought how seldom this single and unattached self is justly estimated by any one, without the concomitant of fortune or connection, or petty *éclat* of some kind or other. Andrew had not realized this, and still less had he realized all that had been passing in poor Marian's heart throughout the day. He had been able to read only her face, and that had made him anxious enough. He was thoroughly and completely upset. He felt an irresistible desire to prove, whether by life or death, that he was no such cipher as they wished to suppose, to prove himself a worthy son of the farmer, Christian of Liebwyl, "sans peur et sans reproche." Now women have a singular power of reading countenances; it seems as though this were the key through which they

get access to the hearts of men; and a powerful instrument it is, when it is not neutralised by a mania for contradiction, less ambitious of utilising the discoveries than of defeating them. Mothers are in general wiser and more temperate in this matter than wives—their love is generally less selfish. For one thing, they read the hearts of their sons more clearly—clearer far than the hearts of their daughters; and far from aiming at contravening them, they take a protective and guiding attitude, not to speak of a positive softening influence, which melts the hearts it desires to mould, just as iron is melted before it can be cast.

So both Anna and Marian divined perfectly what was passing through Andrew's mind: as for Marian, it made her shudder. She was utterly past speaking a single kind word; and if she had opened her lips something bitter would certainly have fallen from them. Anna, on the contrary, roused herself, and continued:

"As for all these things, they've not been uppermost; indeed, we've not had time to talk over them amongst ourselves. For myself, I shall be only too willing to give up my cares, and the sooner Andrew brings me a daughter-in-law the better. I am perfectly willing to give up the management to her. I'm weary, and I shall be glad to rest. Besides, governing has never been my strong point: but as to other things, they don't concern me in particular,

so you must consult the others. It is always important to make things very clear at first, to avoid disputes. I'm quite sure Felix won't be exacting; but if Annette should happen to marry, we can't tell what views her husband might have. Let us all think and talk it well over amongst ourselves before anything is decided upon."

"By all means," responded Christian; "but where are the others? we'd better call them."

Anna was about to speak once more, but the Farmer from Dorngrüt broke in with:

"Oh! no, there's no such hurry; if you fetch them in they'll imagine that I can't wait; and that's not the case. My wish is that we should feel perfectly free on both sides. There's no knowing what any day may bring forth; things happen sometimes very unexpectedly. Consult among yourselves, and when you have quite decided, let me know. If you don't send word I shall not mind, for the affair only half pleases me,—indeed, but that the girl seems as though she'd like to live here, I'd rather it was off at once. It's been entirely her wish, and not mine; but you must please to remember that it isn't just any arrangement that'll suit us. Girls are easily consoled, and mine's no fool, I can assure you. There's nothing of that nonsense in our family. If we can't have this one, we can have that; and if we can't have that, we can do without; that's our reasoning. But now we mustn't stay on this

way, talking; it's four o'clock, and we've other things to attend to. It's these confounded planks that bother me; I wish I had them safely at Dorngrüt. I'm greatly in want of them, and yet I really don't know how to get them there; both we and our horses have more to do than we can well manage. As for the heifer, you can easily send it over by one of your boys; but the planks are not so easy: I'm really so short of time and horses too. Of course if I have to pay for fetching them, that adds to the price."

"Oh! don't trouble yourself about that," replied Anna; "we'll contrive to send you them, and we can give you our answer at the same time. Perhaps Thursday or Friday would suit you."

"Perfectly, as to time, but if I'm to pay the carriage, it'll throw me out, and I'd rather wait."

"Oh, dear, no!" exclaimed Christian; "when we make an offer we don't mean it to be paid for. You've only to say which day will suit you best."

"Thank you, then almost any day'll do—say Friday. You won't need to bring hay with you, we've plenty; but we're rather short of oats; certainly hay is better. But now it's time to go, or it'll be quite dark before we get home."

"Nay, you must take something before you go:" and immediately wine-glasses were placed one after another on the table, and who knows when the move would really have been made if Marian had not at

last insisted! Her eyes ached and her cheeks burned; and she would have given anything to be in her own little room again, to weep out her sorrow and indignation unrestrained. She dreaded going: she felt as though enchained by some spell in spite of her wish to return home—like a cloud disposed to rain but obliged to hail; for rain or hail depends not on the will of the cloud, but on the currents of air it meets, and the winds that drive it. Marian urged their departure therefore, though against her inclination. She was vexed with everyone: with herself especially, because she had such difficulty in keeping back her tears; with her father, because he had tried to grind everyone down; with Andrew and his parents because they asked for time to reflect, just as though they meant to refer the matter to a special commission.

In fact it was a ruse of Anna's, though a harmless and allowable one, this postponement for further consideration. She had divined the sentiments of the listeners, and wished to avert their expression. A crisis of this nature is by no means uncommon, whether in the affairs of nations or families, and everything may depend upon its being safely passed. But Marian, as a young and inexperienced girl, had no perception of this: she could not brook returning home in as great uncertainty as she had started; she felt as though she were again beaten back from port into the wide

and dangerous sea, where the enemy might effectually board her.

All the family from Liebwyl accompanied her as far as Herlingen; but she vouchsafed scarcely a word, and on parting the usual commonplaces were exchanged, but with an utter want of cordiality, though tears stood in the eyes of more than one.

When they were at last alone, Marian followed her father in gloomy silence. The latter had spoken to her more than once without obtaining any reply, when, on turning round, he saw she had her handkerchief up to her face.

"Are you crying?" he inquired.

"Oh, no! I think I've got a little cold."

"I'm sure I don't know why you should cry, any way. If you settle amongst these people, you'll do; and if not, why something better will be forthcoming. They're queer sort of people: they think themselves mighty keen, and after all they don't in the least understand what they're about. Why, in the matter of the heifer alone, I did them out of fifty francs. I don't know when I've met with such arrant simpletons. That's the sort of people to do business with; but as to living with them, they'd soon worry you out of your wits. That was why I held back, while you would not deign to open your lips."

"But suppose, after all, father, that they shouldn't consent? For really you did drive it rather hard."

"Consent! Why if they don't consent, I shall have got my planks dirt cheap, and a first-rate heifer for a mere trifle; but don't distress yourself, they'll come round. I know what they're after. I think they knew too when they invited us, in a way that might lead us to think they were quite ready to consent. I think it's we who want time to reflect. Indeed they ought to think themselves very much obliged to us for taking the trouble to go and see them. But that young one really did put me quite into a rage with his upishness, when he was called upon to speak. If I'm not very much mistaken, there's something against them, or he wouldn't have had to go so far to look for a wife. It's best to be on one's guard. But so it is, the pot's boiling and we must just watch it."

If Marian had not known her father well, these sentiments would hardly have failed to produce an injurious effect. Even as it was, she was almost unconsciously influenced by them: her affection was damped and her judgment embittered; whereas, both left to themselves would have subsided into calm and sweetness.

Her mother, too, didn't fail to contribute to this result. She had been delighted at the prospect of the affair being concluded forthwith, as she was counting upon a good-natured, generous son-in-law who would keep her well supplied with presents of

coffee; and now to hear that this was quite uncertain! She grew furious.

"Really," she exclaimed, "such an old curmudgeon as your father is doesn't exist. He always was so, and he always will be. But I must say I take it very ill that these people should ask for time to reflect. There must be very little in it. If the young man felt a spark of love for you he would bring them over to his way of thinking; at least I know our boys would. For my part, I should like to let them see that we're not to be led by the nose. Indeed, even if they should come with a favourable answer, I would advise that we should take no notice of it for some time. No, no, they mustn't imagine that we haven't bread to eat. We must teach them what's the custom. He's rich, no doubt, and you wouldn't be amiss with him; but you must give him clearly to understand that you're not going all that distance to be 'Canton de Berned' and commanded! No, if you go, it's to do the best for yourself, and to live accordingly."

Such was the strain that resounded around poor Marian; and although she had at the time felt the truth of all that had been said at Liebwyl, this plausible reasoning had undermined its effect. She proposed to herself to receive Andrew very coldly if he came on the Friday, and to withdraw very quickly. And even if he brought an assent, she would certainly receive it in silence.

Added to this, a re-appearance of Keller occurred at this juncture, and he had seemed more in earnest and reasonable than usual. He had probably got scent of what had transpired; anyhow, one fine evening witnessed his arrival. He came, looking perfectly unconscious of what had happened, and seating himself by the door, inquired for the master, entertaining the mistress meanwhile with recitals of his wealth and of his various projects.

On the arrival of the farmer, who assumed a defiant air, Keller announced to him that he had heard what had been going on, and supposed it was over at last. "By-the-by," he continued, "there have been queer stories current about your daughter, so that I've not been disposed to be in a hurry; but, after all, there may not be any truth in them; in fact I'm inclined to believe it's all false. Of course we never know how short a time we may have to live; sometimes it's much shorter than we think. A neighbour of mine, the other day, went to bed perfectly well, and they found him dead the next morning. I assure you it made me feel uneasy; at our age we ought not to be alone at night lest anything should happen, and no one at hand to know anything about it, or to say so much as a prayer at the last."

"Very true," replied Marian's mother; "that's exactly what I've thought sometimes when my husband's been coughing beside me as though he'd

almost cough his heart out. It's a good thing to have a little book of short prayers always at hand, because it's not easy to find anything at night in a hurry, especially if it's a thing not in constant use. And then it's awful to think, if it should be too late, and a poor soul go out of the world so troubled that it can't rest; it's far better when one leaves the world, really to leave it, and not to come back and haunt those that are left behind."

"How you talk!" muttered her husband; "do, pray, go and see after the pigs; don't you hear what a noise they're making? It's always the way with women: they work themselves up about what they've nothing to do with, and leave their work to its fate. I'm sure I don't know what would become of us if we didn't look after them."

"Very true," answered Keller; "but, all the same, I think it's just as well to think about one's soul now and then; it can do no harm. Do you know, I have such queer sensations sometimes: everything seems to go round, and I feel as though I were setting off full gallop, faster, faster, faster, and yet I'm just in the same place. I'm convinced I sha'n't live long; and I confess I should like to have some one at hand to pray for me. Besides, life is long, and sometimes things come that we shouldn't have wished for; but those who have a fortune to leave like to have some one to leave it to. That's why I thought I should like

to speak to you; I don't see that there's any difficulty in the way. Where's your daughter? Is she at home?"

The Peasant of Dorngrüt had been listening with ill-disguised pleasure; nevertheless he exclaimed that he did not see that there was any hurry: for one thing, there was no lawyer at hand; and as to his daughter, he really did not know what turn her ideas might have taken. "Besides," he added, "I shall have to know what you have to propose."

Hereupon Keller began to cough violently, and took a long time to recover his breath; he seemed as though something had seized him at his chest: at last, when a little easier, shaking the while his head, he began:

"Ah, yes; it's very clear I shall not be here long. This sort of attack is a warning. I must go home: the night air's too much for me. But remember, any day that you like to come and see me, I've no doubt we can arrange satisfactorily. Only don't delay, or it may be too late. Good-bye, good night."

"Ah, you old Jew!" exclaimed Marian's father when he had left him. Nevertheless the bright perspective of his daughter's early widowhood had made an impression upon him: he was inclined to think there was something in it; at any rate he must think it over. Marian herself saw through

Keller's devices, and the thought of a fresh attempt upon her from this quarter increased her indignation against Andrew. So these miseries were to set in again; and if he had only not been so headstrong he might have averted it.

Nor was all calm and auspicious at Liebwyl. On their way back from escorting their visitors, they began to talk on indifferent topics, without anyone asking another what they thought of Marian.

"You should go now and gather the beans again," said Anna to her daughter.

"Oh! I thought there'd be a storm," remarked Christian."

"Father, shall I go and turn off the water from the sluices?" inquired Andrew.

"I think the grain is filling out nicely," Christian remarked; and talking of trifles such as these they regained the house.

Annette was annoyed: she disliked having to digest in silence whatever was uppermost in her mind; but she well knew that what her father and mother did not allude to was not to be discussed. As she went in to get a basket for the beans, she met Felix, and could not resist asking him what he had thought of "her."

"Pretty well; rather timid, or proud, I hardly know which."

"As for me, I'm amazed that such a girl as that

should have bewitched Andrew, and he generally so very difficult to please. She's pretty, no doubt, but not prettier than scores of others near. Besides, she doesn't speak a word. I tried every subject I could think of—the weather, fairs, servants, dress; I could get nothing but 'yes,' or 'no,' and perhaps now and then 'indeed'! And then her pride: she didn't exchange a single word with the servants. I could see how vexed they were. And her manners: did you see how she ate her meat at the tip of her fork? And did you notice her pocket-handkerchief? it was so small and so fine that when she wanted to use it, it was ever so long before she could find it in her pocket. I'm inclined to think she doesn't use one except on great occasions."

"For shame, Annette," exclaimed Felix; "what would anyone think who heard you? As for you when you go on a visit, you look as serious as though you were hearing a sermon. Perhaps it's just the same with her; at least, that she's a great deal more agreeable at home than anywhere else."

"Be quiet, Felix, or it'll be a long time before I choose to talk to you again. I should have thought I might confide in you, and this is how you take it."

"Well, never mind; I am only saying what others say, that most girls have two faces, one for home, and the other for visits. Some are charming

at home, and disagreeable elsewhere; and with others it's just the reverse. I know which I prefer. And, in spite of all our caution, we're apt to be entrapped, because we so seldom see girls quietly at home, and can't picture how they look when they're at their work, or when they're talking over their neighbours."

"Come, come, Felix, I'm not going to be lectured. The next time you want the doctor, you may go for him yourself." And so saying, Annette disappeared among the beans.

At night when the household had gone to bed, and Christian and Anna were alone together, they were at first silent for some time, and Christian sighed audibly.

"What's the matter, Christian?" inquired Anna.

"I hardly know," he answered; "but I suppose I don't quite know what answer to give in this business—it doesn't half please me."

"In what way?"

"Well, the girl herself is well enough; I've nothing to say on that score, though I should have liked her to be a little more cordial. But the old man is insupportable: he might think he was treating with idiots. He haggled as though he were at a fair, just as though we didn't see through it: I should have been ashamed to drive and drive as he did with any one, even with strangers; and yet he must know who and what we are. He would have bar-

gained for the very clothes off our backs if we would have let him."

"Ah! that's his way. He's so constantly at fairs that he gets a habit of it."

"I don't know anything about that; but really his conditions are outrageous. If he were going to do anything very liberal himself, he might have some right to expect the same from us; but to give nothing and demand everything, is rather too much. One would think his was the only daughter in the world."

"Yes, it is so with people like that; they ask a great deal more sometimes than they ever expect to get, and then they contrive to content themselves generally. I felt terribly for poor Andrew. But what do you think we'd better do?"

"I think we'd better let the children decide it amongst themselves: that is, as to the terms; but as to giving up the management of the farm, I am not at all disposed to consent to that. I was not pleased that the girl never once opposed her father. I do believe, if a young woman who wasn't good and generous minded were to come into our family, I couldn't rest in my grave."

"Oh! how I hope that'll never be. Andrew assures me she's quite the opposite. It's true that we sometimes think a girl very much better than the rest of her family, and when once she comes into authority, she shows just the same

spirit. But we must hope the best. Perhaps she didn't know what to say, or perhaps she felt utterly ashamed of her father, and was afraid of showing it. I can imagine that anyone feeling that would be utterly stupefied. You're afraid of making mistakes if you speak, and if you keep silence you're blamed for it. I hope it's not so with this poor girl. I think if she'd been trying to entrap Andrew, she'd have tried to entrap us also. Perhaps she's one of those people who show all that's passing within them, and they're not the worst. When once they feel they're understood, they're far better to deal with than those who can always look exactly as they please."

"Yes, you're right," replied Christian; "but still, marriage is a serious thing. However careful one may be, it may not turn out well, especially if people don't perfectly understand one another. Andrew generally knows what he's about. Indeed, I'm pretty confident that if once he's convinced the thing won't do, he'll not sit still on the waggon till it upsets. Moreover, he generally knows pretty well what to say. I don't know what had come over him this afternoon."

"Poor boy! his heart was too full: even for ourselves it's no light matter; and how thankful we ought to be that we're at least all of one mind, and that we seek our help in God! We must never let ourselves be too much bent upon anything in this

world, for we never know how soon the world may fail us altogether: we must discuss it, and pray that God will watch over our children's happiness to the end: and He will, I feel assured; hasn't He always been our guide? When first we met we were not what we are now, and yet He didn't forsake us; on the contrary, He's led us and taught us, so that we can now pray to Him in this difficulty with all our heart. I take comfort when I remember that it's the blessing of good parents that builds up the children's house. I dare say we're not what we might be; but still, for all that, I believe that He counts us to be his: our children have indeed our blessing, and God will see to it that it is not unavailing. Shall I pray now, or will you?"

"You, by all means," replied Christian.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, forgive us our sins as we forgive our enemies. Oh! visit them not upon our children; but if we have been enabled to do any little good in the world, let that rather be remembered on their behalf. We dare not ask Thee for riches or distinction for them, but we pray that Thou wilt keep them in Thy ways, with Thy peace in their hearts and in their homes. Keep them ever united, so that in all their sorrows they may be sure of each other's sympathy, and that in every difficulty their confidence in each other may be their sure pillow of repose. Let neither devil nor man ever come be-

tween them. And oh, gracious God, bless her who will come into our house to dwell amongst us. Receive her into Thy flock. Fill her with Thy spirit. Let her be a guide and help to us all, that we may ever respect and willingly obey her. We desire no longer to command. Give Andrew a good and prudent wife; may she be a lover of peace and covetous of the best gifts. Grant to both of them true affection and great patience. May they never lose courage, nor ever lose confidence in each other. May the sun never go down upon their wrath. May they never close their eyes in sleep till they have said good night, and knelt with clasped hands in prayer before Thee. Thus may they be each day enriched with Thy blessing. And now, oh, Father, though we are asking Thee great things, we believe that what we ask in all sincerity, Thou wilt not deem too much; and we know not whether we shall be spared to pray much longer. As to that, Thy will be done; but, oh, bless our children, and may their souls and ours be precious in Thy sight.—Amen."

"Amen," re-echoed Christian.

For the next two days the house was so quiet that one might have thought there was death or mourning in it; everyone was silent, and everything seemed hushed. The work was gone through drearily; everyone keeping to himself as though

preferring to be alone. The servants and labourers seemed to perceive this, and to keep out of the way; but it was not till they had gone quite away, on the Wednesday night, that anything was said.

Christian had been smoking his pipe on his accustomed bench outside the door, when he remarked that the air was keen, and he thought they'd better go in; besides, they had to consider what answer was to be given.

"First of all, who's going to take the planks?" he inquired, when they had sat down.

"I think I will," answered Andrew.

"And which cart will you take them in?"

"The large one."

"Isn't it too heavy?"

"Six plots of planks require a strong cart."

"Will it hold them all?"

"Yes, I think it will; the planks are dry, and it's a good road, and mostly down-hill. It would be a pity to have to go over the ground twice."

"Very well. And now if you're going, what answer shall you give? It's quite time it should be decided."

"Oh! the answer will be short," replied Andrew, covering his eyes with his hand, as though the light was too strong for them.

"Yes, yes; but there are short answers of different kinds," replied his father.

"The fact is, father, there's only one answer

possible. Such conditions are quite out of the question. I couldn't hear of your making yourselves miserable all for me, and for what purpose? Why, for a thing that we can't feel altogether sure about. I had thought of sending the servant; but on reflection I believe it's best for me to go, and finish what I began. Besides, I feel sorry for the girl. She's not at all what she appeared to you here the other day. I feel I should like to see her just once again; and then things must take their course."

"How do you mean?" asked Christian; "we mustn't have any misunderstanding: better not lose courage and throw away the handle after the axe."

"No, no; the old man has put the thing on such a footing that there's no possibility of going on with it. He knows what he's about. He doesn't mean it to come to anything: he's only making a tool of me to make someone else fall into his trap. I see it all quite clearly; but I shall feel it right to tell him so, and to give him to understand that we're not of that kind."

"Stay, stay, Andrew," interposed Anna; "you mustn't insult the father of a girl you love. You must at least try to respect him; but it seems to me that we must go into the question more in detail. What is it that you object to?"

"Why, he insists that the farm shall be reckoned only at about ten thousand pounds, and it's worth

at least double. I don't want to be over-charged for it, but if I took it at that price it would be robbery, and I should come off with twice as much as the other two."

"How?" exclaimed Annette; "fifteen thousand for each of us—why, that would be a fortune. I shall be in request, you'll see!"

"No joking, Annette; it's no time for pleasantry."

"Indeed, father, I didn't mean it in joke," she rejoined; "I meant to say quite seriously, that I should think myself very well off."

"Well, if it is really so," continued her father, "I'm inclined to say the same; and whoever may want to have you, must be made to feel that it's quite a sufficient dowry."

"But that's not all," continued Andrew; "do you think that in the event of my death you should be compelled to leave Liebwyl, and let it get into the hands of such people as these? Not for all the world."

"I'm not clear about that," replied his father; "I would advise that Felix should have a right to the farm at the price you'd pay for it. I confess I shouldn't like to think of it passing out of our hands. Besides, that would be something quite new. I think the world would stare. I hope and trust it may never have the chance, but we can none of us be sure."

"I'd thought of that too," remarked Felix; "to tell the truth, that seemed to me the worst of all: still I wouldn't let it be an obstacle on any account. Father might carry his amendment, or I would even pledge myself to buy it back at a profit. In one way or another I think the girl needn't be lost to Andrew; and I'm quite sure she'd never be so happy with anyone else."

"But can you feel that it would be just that everything should be conceded on one side," said Andrew, "and that marriage should be looked at as a game in which all is to be gained by one party? No! I can't bring my mind to look at it in that light: one would almost think there was some defect or drawback in me that had to be compensated for by money. If I am her inferior in any way I should like to know it. No; I consider there's an effrontery about it that's not to be tolerated."

"If you really love the girl, Andrew," said Anna, "you won't be deterred by that. Once married, God will be on your side. When people truly love they mustn't separate lightly because of some possible risk which may never occur. True love is very rare; it mustn't be risked for a trifle. Happy they who meet with it once in a lifetime. If your brother and sister consent, so do I; and if the girl has any heart, she'll appreciate it."

"Indeed, mother, she has. She's far, far better than you'd think from what you've seen of her. I

was quite puzzled myself the other day; but I believe she'll explain how it happened."

"Then we're all agreed," resumed Christian; "there are not many households where it would have been so. How glad I am! Let it always be so, children, and you'll find the happiness of it; never forget that mutual love and confidence make up the charm of life."

"No, no!" ejaculated Andrew; "all's not ended yet. Even if money matters were settled, I should have to be sure that the girl truly loves me, and that she would be willing to abate her claims. You know, mother, that the old man actually insisted upon our having the farm at once, and Marian taking the entire control."

"Well, and what of that? I shall be glad to rest."

"But this is what I wouldn't consent to on any account whatever. As long as you live, you shall be the mistress here, and manage for us as you have done all along. I couldn't be happy here in any other way."

"Nonsense! Isn't a brisk young wife any day better than an old woman like me? She'll like to have her own way and carry out her own ideas, instead of having to conform to ours."

"The very thing I shouldn't wish. Whoever my wife may be, she must simply become your daughter, just like Annette; and as long as you

live you must be mistress; and the same as to my father, everything must continue on the same footing."

"Come, Andrew, there's reason in everything; it never answers to be headstrong."

"I'm not headstrong, mother; I've thought it well over. We've an establishment here such as no one need ever blush for, enough for ourselves and for others. It has always been so, and so it must always be. Think what we should feel if things were to alter. Now things down there are such as I should be very sorry to see creep in here. People would soon begin to laugh and gossip. If my wife comes into our home, I've a right to expect that she keeps up the habits of the house, and respects my wishes: but all that will have to be learnt. She's not had many advantages; and where will you find a mother capable of teaching her as you will, and so patient and kind? You won't expect her to be perfect all at once, and she'll fall into it by degrees if she's ever so little intelligence, provided only she's disposed for peace and goodwill. If she had to take the reins here all at once, she'd keep house as they do at home, and though she might begin by asking your direction and advice, that would soon be given up; and then, if you were to advise without being asked, who knows how it might be taken? She might think you did it to vex her; she might lose her temper; she might

grow jealous or suspicious if she wasn't pleased; and on the other hand, if we were to keep silence and put up with it all, I don't see that that would be very pleasant."

"Oh! but it might not be so bad as that," said Christian.

"Father, how can we tell? I know my mother well enough to be sure that she'd never harass my wife; but I can't answer as confidently for my wife's temper, or for her ideas. I'm not superstitious. Some people will believe that a great deal depends upon what the weather happens to be on the day of the wedding, and imagine that if it happens to be wet or stormy, the bride will be at cross purposes with her husband all their life together. Nevertheless, a trifle just as small, I verily believe will sometimes have the same effect."

"Very true; we've known that in our own experience, and that when we were old and ought to have been wiser."

"Well, then, this is why I wish to be on my guard. It's easy to follow the lead in a house, but it's quite another thing to be at the head of it. And then, if the girl should be smart and clever, I know my mother's not one to be jealous and afraid of being eclipsed; she always sees the good in everything and in every one, and I want my wife to serve her apprenticeship under her. No, I won't on any account take the farm."

"There's a great deal of truth in what you say, Andrew," remarked his father; "but if you set out on this tack you'll certainly vex them, and they'll throw you overboard."

"Never mind, father; no good ever comes of being too submissive. Such people as these only think you're a fool for it, and drive you further and further. Besides, it might have a bad effect upon the girl herself. If you didn't oppose it, I should be just as determined. You see it's already not at all a case for concessions, seeing that everything's been demanded on one side. We've already granted a great deal too much. It's only fair now, to say the least, that I should enforce my opinion on one point, and that a point which concerns only the girl and myself. If she loves me she won't hesitate; and if she refuses, I shall know what to think, for at these times everyone likes to show their best side. So this shall decide it."

"As to that, I assure you you're mistaken," replied his mother. "When first I became attached to your father, we were not half what we are now to each other. Of course I loved him very much, but I was always afraid of being too submissive to him. Whenever he particularly wished a thing, I used to demur a little before I acquiesced. Sometimes I asked for things myself for nothing at all but to put his love to the test; and if he by any chance refused, I used to make a great to do. If

Christian had been as silly as I was, ten to one we should never have been married. Now, on the contrary, I'd do anything on earth to please him, without thinking of what effect it might have. Oh! no, it isn't well to be always calculating every word and look. The best way is, to realize at first that neither one nor the other are exactly what they ought to be, and to resolve that love shall be a whetstone on which everything that is good shall be sharpened. If my dear mother were but here again, she'd explain it all to you perfectly."

"Mother, as to that I entirely agree with you: but don't misunderstand me; it isn't that only. The question is, whether my father and mother shall be turned off like a pair of old shoes, or whether a young couple oughtn't to delight to be subject to them; whether a woman oughtn't to be willing to obey her husband, as the Bible commands, or whether he ought to submit to her like a simpleton. Certainly, if I were in your place, I wouldn't consent to retire till I knew how things were likely to be managed. But I'm afraid we don't agree; and indeed, mother, I'm disappointed: I thought you loved me well enough to wish to train my young wife for me. Perhaps after all you're not pleased with my choice; and in this case I'll wash my hands of it before it's too late. It would be far better this way than that you should re-

proach me afterwards, and tell me you knew all along how it would be."

"Listen, Andrew," said his father; "don't be unreasonable. I know in your heart you cannot doubt your mother. I agree with you that it's best not to think of giving up the farm during our life-time, but if either your mother or I should be taken, then would be the time; the survivor should retire, and the young people take the lead. The thing is for you to look well into the matter on all sides, and to be very sure how it would be likely to work, and what people would think whichever way you decide."

"No, no, that would never disturb me very much."

"Do you think not? I should have thought you had more sense. Don't you know by this time, that whoever you may be you're sure to have both friends and enemies? and there's no occasion like a marriage for bringing this out. If the thing should fall through, it's always made out to be the special fault of one party or the other; and all sorts of charges are invented if the real cause doesn't transpire. You've only to remember what was said of us not very long ago; and yet we'd nothing to reproach ourselves with: as likely as not, all that'll be taken hold of now, and it'll be made out that I'm bankrupt; or that, worse still, you had had some immoral connection. The Dorngrüt family wouldn't be

scrupulous as to facts. Remember, Andrew, this is something of what you would have to suffer, and you can't tell what effect it might produce upon you; for injustice of that kind generally leaves a wound. Think of all this, and remember, too, that it's far better for a girl to be too fastidious than the reverse. I don't say this to induce you to accept their conditions, but to guide you as to making up your mind. It'll be better than saying, 'oh, if I'd only realized this or that,' when it's too late. And now, good night; think it well over, so that you may form a wise decision. You've the rudder in your hands, but you have to steer between two whirlpools."

After this there was no further discussion of the subject. The following day the planks had to be got ready, and everyone returned to their individual reflections, which was decidedly favourable to the progress of the work of the house. Felix spent the whole of the morning in the stables, watering and grooming the horses. One would have taken him for a bridegroom about to drive off and claim his bride.

"What a pity you're not a lady's maid!" remarked Annette in passing. "Many a lady would be glad to have such an industrious one."

"I dare say; and it's just as true that a little brushing down would do no harm to some farmers'

daughters, though it might be difficult to make them quite clean."

"Come, come, you may say what you like on that score. I wonder which is likely to be the cleanest—a young peasant girl, or an old fellow like you, with your shirt clean on once every six months!"

Thereupon Felix gave his sister a liberal sprinkling with the mop he held in his hand, at which she began to scream vigorously, and then thought it prudent to retire.

In the afternoon Felix polished the harness till it shone like a mirror, and was incessantly going into the kitchen to ask either for oil or rag or vinegar for the purpose. He was very tenacious of the credit of the equipage. In some countries no one short of a count thinks of driving more than a pair of horses; but in our canton the farmers and peasants seldom drive less than four; and a real pleasure it is to sit behind them, driving through wood and dale: horses and driver are old acquaintances, and for the latter to raise his whip is enough. This whip is in fact a very sceptre, and the carrying of it quite a point of honour. When a father gives it into the hand of his son, it is considered a mark of the utmost confidence: as to taking it out of his hand, this would be something little short of disinheriting him. In fact, a general degraded to the rank of common soldier could hardly feel more humiliated than a farmer's son ordered back into

the fields among the labourers, from having followed the plough: merely to threaten it is considered quite enough in the case of a youth disposed to over-drive his horses, and to be too fond of the public-house.

Andrew, accordingly, held the whip, Felix never having had any ambition that way: still he was no less bent upon the turn-out being resplendent; and in disposing the planks in the cart (erected like a monster plume), he was liberal of great stout chains to bind them with.

"Surely they don't require all these," remarked Andrew; "the roads are so good there won't be much jolting."

"Oh! let them alone," replied Felix; "better have too many than too few. I should like them to see that we're above using paltry bits of rope."

Andrew had decided to start at three o'clock in the morning, and alone. His father had proposed accompanying him, urging that two are always better than one; but he had refused, determined to conclude the affair for himself, as a man ought.

When an expedition of this kind is forthcoming at a farmhouse, there is but little sleep for any one the night before, and yet no one looks any the worse or different for it the next day. It is not like town households, where the cook will grumble for weeks if by any chance she has had to get up for once at five instead of six. Someone always stays

the whole of the night in the stables to feed the horses, and he never goes to bed at all. Swiss farmers' horses eat plentifully, and at their ease. The housewife throws herself on her bed half undressed, for fear she should sleep too soundly; for it is not only coffee or a glass of *eau de vie* that will be wanted in the morning, but a substantial breakfast of omelette or fried potatoes; and what remains of this is always given, as soon as the cart has set off, to the man who has been up all night in the stables.

When Andrew had finished his breakfast, all was ready for him, for the whole of the household were up by common consent. Anna urged upon him not to be too positive, and above all not to consider her, if the question of taking the management should come up; adding, that at the worst the girl might take it well and be tractable.

"Think of what I said last night," added his father; "it's always awkward to go back when things have gone this far. And here!" he called out from the remote end of the inner room, "if you want money, the key's in my trousers pocket. Try and have the girl, if you're really bent upon her, and we'll hope that all will work well afterwards. After all, she's not too old to learn."

"Very true, but that's the very reason why I shouldn't coax and flatter her beforehand, or she'd be sure to turn round upon me afterwards, and say

that she'd been deceived. No, father, I always think it's best to be very plain beforehand."

"Well, well, do as you please; perhaps you're right. But whichever way it may end, don't take it too much to heart; prepare to say that it's all for the best."

"I'll try," rejoined Andrew, and shaking hands with his father as he wished him good-bye, he set off. The whip had been hung on the collar of one of the horses, which began to neigh and rub its head against Andrew's arm as he took it into his hand, Felix meanwhile making a general inspection by the light of his lantern.

"Is there plenty of hay in?" asked Andrew, who had not forgotten the cautious reminder of the Farmer of Dorngrüt.

"Plenty, in all conscience. I thought you might like to give a feed to your future father-in-law's horses as well as your own; I dare say they don't get more than enough!"

"You're sure you've not forgotten anything?" called out Anna. "Have you got your pocket-handkerchief, and your watch, and plenty of string?"

"Yes, mother; I think I'm all right."

"Very well, then; good-bye, God bless you: go gently, and don't stay too late."

"Hue!" exclaimed Andrew, raising the whip; and the horses set off by the light of Felix's lantern

till they had passed the farm-yard. The gateway was rather narrow, but as this served to show the skill of the driver of a team, the gate-posts had always been studiously placed in precisely the same spot every time they had had to be renewed. The young Jehu would have blushed to require any greater facilities than his predecessors; and it would have been quite a by-word in the village that Andrew was such a muff that they had been obliged to widen the gateway for him to drive through, though it had stood the same width for a hundred years.

In spite of his load Andrew passed through as easily as usual. With his whip in his hand and his horses before him, he felt more and more conscious of his personal dignity, and resolved to decline having to purchase a wife.

Love is a strange contradiction. At times both proud and humble: now it will endure anything, again it will explode with resentment like a powder barrel. Now sweeter than honey, in an instant it will turn to gall. It will give its life, and yet refuse trifles. It will offer, spontaneously, all that it possesses, and yet grudge a kreutzer when it is exacted. It will encounter the most painful tests, and then after all disdain the due recompense of them.

Andrew was this time totally undisturbed by the agitations of the former expedition. His attitude was, if not haughty, at least firm and resolute; and he

arrived at Dorngrüt with head erect (like the heads of his horses), and making the village resound with their neighings and the cracking of his whip. This time he had not long to wait for a welcome, for Marian came up to him immediately with outstretched hand, telling him how impatient she had been for his arrival, and how afraid that perhaps he might not come at all.

"And do you bring good news?" she inquired.

"I suppose so," replied Andrew, still holding her hand, while with the other she stroked and patted Dragon, who pawed and fretted as though he might have only just left the stable. "Indeed, our people have been so good to me, they make me feel really ashamed."

"Oh! how glad I am! You can't think how happy this makes me. Do you know that old Keller has been here promising my father everything imaginable, and actually deluding him with the idea that he hasn't long to live; so that I've been in mortal fear lest *that* should happen to me. True, nothing's settled even yet: my father only gives evasive answers; still, I can't help feeling, that if the least hitch were to occur in our affair, he would inevitably conclude the other."

"Don't be afraid," replied Andrew.

And now Marian's mother arrived, and Andrew offered her his hand, which she did not take till she had wiped both hers with her apron, re-

marking that she had just been greasing her husband's shoes. "It's well you've come," she continued, "or the girl would have cried her eyes out, though I kept assuring her that you certainly wouldn't start before midnight. But there's no one here to help you and to show you where to put up; the day's hot already, and the flies are terrible. Marian, see where those lazy fellows are, Hans and Billy."

But Marian stayed by Andrew, praising the horses, and again and again exclaiming how long the last few days had seemed. In general girls are not apt to make these confessions except *tête-à-tête;* on the contrary, they assume an aspect of entire indifference before spectators. Strange, till we reflect that for the most part they are compelled to dissimulate, brought up to it by shallow-minded mothers or governesses, or indoctrinated by foolish books, all of which require them to play a false and stupid part, instead of honestly giving expression to the noblest faculty of their nature—their pure womanly love, in all its simplicity.

"How can you talk this way?" remarked Marian's mother. "However much you may love anyone, you should never let it be seen, for every reason. On the contrary, in these cases you should always show your claws, or you'll stand a fair chance of being made a slave of. But, I say, didn't you hear me? I told you to run and see after those fellows."

At this juncture the master himself came slowly down from the loft, saying that the men had just set off with the manure cart; and adding, "but you'll manage well enough without." Then walking slowly round the cart, and scrutinising the planks before saying good morning to Andrew, he inquired:

"You're sure that these are the very same that I selected?"

"Whether they're the same or not," replied Andrew, "I defy you to find any better: but you must tell me where I'm to unload; I don't like to keep my horses standing long here in the sun."

The peasant showed him which way to turn through a narrow opening between the farm-buildings, remarking: "It's much if you're able to pass."

"We shall see," replied Andrew; and sounding his whip, without more ado they reached the spot, where they drew up sharply.

"Oh, oh! I see you know what you're about," exclaimed the old man in spite of himself, and perhaps rather regretting that the cart had not upset.

"Why, how well he drives!" exclaimed his wife. "I doubt whether any of us could have done as much. Marian, see if there are any eggs in the nest; I haven't enough in the house to make an omelette: when one's never allowed to have

a franc in one's pocket, one's eggs go to pay the baker."

"Mother," exclaimed Marian, "I don't know where the hens are laying," and running off in the direction of the stable, she at once proceeded to help Andrew in taking out the horses; though he repeatedly begged she would not take the trouble.

"Come! that's fine," ejaculated her mother; "think of a girl not knowing where the hen's nest is; but this lad has bewitched her. If she loses him it will be all over with her. And after all it's no wonder. He's not amiss, and he doesn't look as though he'd be close-fisted. I wonder whether he's brought me anything: it would be only fair if I have to give him my eggs."

Andrew looked black when he perceived that he had to put his horses into a dark, close-smelling stable, from which they might hardly come out alive; and he doubted how they would agree with those of his host, which were already kicking and making demonstrations at the presence of strangers, just as, in an inhospitable house, the aspect of the children, and even of the very dog on the door-step, will indicate the characteristics of the family.

The unloading was a long business, especially as the old man would have the planks piled up in reserve, and not laid out for present use. He, however, had not prepared any props for this, but expected Andrew to cut and arrange them, while

from time to time the hubbub in the stable required him to go and arrange matters there. Andrew at last, tired of these frequent interruptions, remarked that the horses had better be let alone, they would not eat each other; but this was without effect, for he returned to the charge, not sparing his whip on the backs of Andrew's horses.

It was at least an hour before they sat down to dinner, and Marian's expression of countenance had visibly altered.

"We can't entertain you as we were entertained at your house," she remarked; "but I can answer for all being clean."

"You're joking," he replied to her; "I wouldn't for the world that you should make any difference for me."

Andrew did not half perceive Marian's vexation at her mother's not having been able to provide better, and at the absence of all taste and keeping in the aspect of the table. He only saw that she again looked cloudy and anxious, and again he asked himself whether she was not surely of a capricious temper. He would have given a great deal not to perceive this. The coffee seemed to him bad, and the omelette detestable—for in fact the quantity of flour had been out of all proportion to the eggs. The less Marian looked pleasant the less he ate, and the less he ate the more harrowed Marian felt, though not a word escaped her to betray

what she was feeling. She had learnt to keep her sorrows, great and small, to herself—at the most betaking herself to her room and giving them vent there in sobs and tears.

"Well," inquired the peasant at last (the wine having been placed on the table), "what message have you brought? I'm heartily sorry that it's ever been talked about; but since the mischief's done, I may as well know whether the terms suit you or not. You know, when the cat smells fish, it doesn't run after the mice."

"True; but many a cat may die of hunger if it leaves the mice for the chance of the fish."

"Mice or fish, I repent having ever made you the proposal."

"And do you repent?" inquired Andrew, turning to Marian.

"You know I feel the same as ever."

"Very well then, I hope we shall find it possible to arrange the matter. My family have been kindness itself to me, advising me about everything. It's agreed that I take the farm at an estimate of about ten thousand pounds; and that if I die childless, my wife's to have this ten thousand pounds to do what she likes with."

"How? To have the farm, you mean."

"No! the farm has been in our family as long as anyone can remember, and we could none of us bear to think of such a change as that. So Felix

thinks, that if he should survive me, he would like to keep it up, for the sake of the family."

"Ha! ha! I see what you're after. You fancy we don't know which is best worth having,—ten thousand pounds, or the farm! I shouldn't quite have thought for such a cheat as that: but there's more to come, no doubt; so out with it."

"Really I'm not aware there's anything unreasonable in what I've said. Ten to one the thing will never happen—I'm sure it's to be hoped not. All the profits and debts are to be mine till the death of either of my parents; but till then, everything's to go on as it now is: it seems to me this is all quite fair and just."

"Does it, indeed!" exclaimed the farmer, slowly pushing himself and his chair back from the table, with both hands on the latter; "it's very clear that you mean to make what you like out of it, and that won't suit me by any means."

"Indeed I've no thought or wish of the kind," replied Andrew.

"Come, come," answered the farmer, rising from his chair, "at any rate you're not such a dolt as not to see the difference between your taking the farm immediately for ten thousand pounds, and your having it at that sum twenty years hence, or longer—yes, ever so much longer, for people are always long-lived when they've anything to leave. Why, if you take the farm now, in twenty years

you may have saved up a pretty sum, because of course you needn't make such an allowance to your parents as you would if you were paying strangers: so that they've enough to make ends meet, that's all that's necessary."

"Not quite. I shouldn't wish to stint my parents, any more than you'd like your children to treat you that way."

"Nonsense; we have things as we make them, and I'm no fool in money matters. Besides, if, as you say, it'll all come to the same thing, why not accept my conditions at once?"

"Good God!" sighed Andrew to himself.

"I'll just tell you everything. My mother has always been very good to us. She's an excellent woman, so that I should be ashamed to cast her off like an old shoe: she wouldn't resist, though it would pain her dreadfully. You see, we've rather different ways from what you have here, and one must keep to the customs of the place; indeed, one would only get talked about for not doing so. And that's why I've wished that Marian should come in like a child of the house, and get into our ways by degrees; besides that, it would all be easy to her then when her turn comes. Anyhow, she wouldn't be amiss with us: we shouldn't work her hard, and it would be altogether easier to her beginning this way."

"Now that is fine!" replied the farmer's wife.

"It must be a strange sort of household, yours, where you're always considering you're mother. Here she's never even thought of, unless when some one's wanted on whom to throw the blame of some mistake: why, we might have had a hundred children married without my being ever so much as consulted, unless there happened to be the wedding clothes to see to, and all the linen to spin; and ten to one that would be only after asking me what I'd done with all the flax."

"Come, come," interrupted her husband, "if you're going to wash up you'd better set about it; and perhaps you'll try if you can't let the fire go out for once in a way."

During this brief digression, Andrew had been repeating to Marian herself how much better his plan would be for her than her father's.

"Indeed, indeed," she rejoined, "I should wish nothing better, for really I've felt very anxious already as to how I should manage at first; there's so much difference in the ways of different houses."

"Come, I see it's all of no use," resumed the farmer when he had got his wife out of the way. "I'll pay you for your planks. I see what you're after. You'd soon treat my daughter like a dog. You could do nothing else, beginning as you would do: but, as I've said before, when the cat smells fish, she doesn't go after the mice."

"Stay, father," pleaded Marian; "it seems to me all quite right. How could I take the lead before I'd learnt anything?"

"Don't talk nonsense; it's not your business."

"Really, father, I should have thought I had a little to do with it."

"What you've to do is to obey your father; and what I've said, I've said." And so ending he went to fetch the money.

"Dear, dear, what a Prussian!" exclaimed Andrew with a groan. "One would have thought we might at least express an opinion on what concerns us."

"But he's always so," replied Marian in a plaintive voice. "He will have his own way in the parish, and he does just as he pleases with all of us at home. But don't despair; with God's help I'll be true to you. I know we shall never make my father relent: you must take another course. If you love me you'll agree to what he asks. I'll promise you I'll be a good daughter to your parents, whether they have the farm or not. When once you've got me away from here it'll be different, and we can set things right—there'll be no one to order us then. I'll obey you in everything: you won't repent it."

"I know you love me, and you find it easy to obey me; but your father's right in so far as that we have to consider life and death, and as to things

being as we make them. I'm ready to do anything that depends upon me; but I can't go and overlook my relations, as though they didn't exist."

"But tell me, Andrew, don't you love me? Your relations are willing to do anything for you; I see how dear you are to them; but if you don't take advantage of this, and come to terms with my father, he'll insist upon the other marriage, and then think what a lot will be mine!"

"As to loving you, Marian, I love you more than myself; but your father is headstrong; and moreover, what he exacts is unjust. Would you have me treat my father and mother this way?"

"Oh! but I would make it all up to them: I would be a good, dutiful daughter. Already, you see, I have learnt to obey. Do but agree to what my father requires, for there's no possibility of his ever altering his terms; he never does." And the poor girl, who felt her whole happiness at stake, took both Andrew's hands in hers; and looking him pleadingly in the face, entreated him beyond the power of words.

"It's no use, Marian," exclaimed Andrew, as he tenderly drew her to him. "If I'd seven lives I'd give you them, because they would be my own. I believe you'll be all that you say, and will never break your word; but think now, is there anything so uncertain as life, and I have to provide against what might happen?"

"Oh! but you won't die; at least it isn't likely it should happen so: you should have confidence in God."

"Yes, but we are always responsible to Him for what we do and plan; and though He tells us to place our trust in Him, yet He tells us also to take heed to our ways."

"Listen!" exclaimed Marian, "he's counting the money: he'll have finished directly. Oh! do, do, consent, and all our sorrow will be over."

"My poor child, think. If I were called to die, and knew that, once dead, my parents would be compelled to leave the home they've loved so much—think, what should I feel? and what would you? And do you think my mind would be at ease, and free to think of the world to come?"

"Hark! he's coming; he's finished counting; there's time yet. Oh, promise to say 'yes;' we can alter it afterwards: it's the only chance. Andrew, promise. Oh! you wouldn't leave me here!"

"Marian," resumed Andrew solemnly, "would you really urge me to lie to your father, and to wrong my own? Would you have us begin life together with a lie in our right hand? Could we dare to hope for happiness on such a foundation? No! we will be true to each other, and upright to all men; and when they fail us, let us put our trust entirely in God. Then, come what will, we shall

be happy together, either in this world or in the next."

Marian had sunk into a chair; her eyes were haggard, and her lips trembled; the sobs she dared not utter made her frame quiver as she leant her burning head upon her arm, and at this moment, apparently unconscious of her presence, her father approached the table on which she was leaning, placing pile after pile of small coin in order on it.

"See, here it is. I dare say you'll be glad to get home again; so I won't keep you."

Andrew approached the table without so much as looking at the money, and with an intensely agitated heart.

"Indeed, I can't go away without being allowed to say a single reasonable word. As to the matter of money, let that pass. I think we have shown that that's not the chief thing in our ideas, by never once inquiring whether you meant to settle anything upon your daughter, or how much. For the present we're well off, and whether we might at some future time be glad for Marian to have brought a dowry or not, we'll leave in God's hands. But I think I ought to explain just one thing to you. Sometimes things will happen in a family, which, with God's help, it can pull through, but not without. It was once just so with us; and my father had thought of giving me the farm then:

but he soon reflected that this would not be fair to my mother, who had brought him a large dowry, especially as she had always been such a good wife to him: besides, he felt it would be unjustifiable for him to deprive her of her position before Providence had deprived her of her health and strength and fitness for it. As for himself, he would have had no objection whatever to have done with business. And now, I think you surely must see that I couldn't possibly behave in any other way to a mother who has always done her very utmost for us. Much as I love your daughter, I could never consent to accept her on such conditions; and most assuredly she herself would not be the loser by coming to be a second daughter to my mother. How would you feel if it were a question of one of your children?"

"As to my children, we'll leave them alone, if you please; and as to your mother, what on earth is all that to me? I tell you I've made up my mind: here's your money; count it while I go down and see after the horses."

And so saying he went out.

Tears streamed down Andrew's cheeks without his being aware of it.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that any man with children of his own can exact such conduct from another's! It comes to this, we must be faithful to each other. For the rest"—(and he

held out his hand to Marian, who stood, pale and agitated, before him)—"say one kind word to me, pray: and if you need me, only let me know through the mistress of the inn; she has promised she will always do this much for us. Adieu."

He held out both arms to Marian, but she turned from him suddenly, and trembling with indignation, exclaimed: "Go! I see now how much you care for my happiness. I've implored you to rescue me, and this is all I've obtained. You've abandoned me, and now God will abandon you. Go! I refuse either to listen or to look at you again;"—and with choking sobs she rushed into the next room, where, in the presence of her mother, she threw herself on the bed and gave way to an agony of grief.

Andrew hastened after her, and kneeled down by the side of the bed, which shook violently with her sobs: he tried to take her hand, again petitioning for one kind word; but Marian only buried her head deeper in the coverlet.

"Let her alone," remonstrated her mother; "when once she gets into this state there's no getting a word out of her; it's all of no use. You've spoilt the whole thing; and, as my husband says, we have things as we make them. Of course no one could expect you quite to overlook your mother; but, you see, I'm a mother myself, and so that my son-in-law didn't let me

want for food, nor stint me in coffee, I'm sure that's quite as much as I should have any right to expect. But now you'd much better go. She's quite unmanageable when she gets into this sort of mood; and if her father should come in, what would he say?"

"But you can't expect me to go like this!"

"It's no one's fault but your own. Take your money and go. It's all over."

"Heigh! are you coming?" shouted a harsh voice from outside. "No one here can harness your horses."

"Let them alone, pray," answered Andrew; then once more turning to Marian:

"Only one word—oh, in pity don't send me away so miserably!"

"He's here; take your money, quick," shouted his hostess, and giving him his hat she slipped the money into it. "Adieu! it's no use taking on this way; things scarcely ever turn out as we should wish, and the sooner we cease to expect it the better."

"Ah! here you are," exclaimed the farmer, as Andrew re-appeared. "I never in my life had such horses as yours in my stable; the sooner you come to them the better."

"I should think so," replied Andrew; "they're more reasonable than some men are, when they are but treated reasonably."

"I suppose you don't pretend to show me how to treat horses?" retorted the farmer.

"No, by no means; it would take me far too long."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that there are different sorts, both of horses and men, and some of each can bear things that would make others almost jump out of their skin. All depends upon what they're accustomed to."

The reply to this was lost upon Andrew, who found a terrific hubbub in the stable. All the farm servants were there, armed with whips and pitchforks; and all but Andrew's horses had been taken out of the way. Andrew immediately ordered the men out as well, and the effect was instantaneous: all the kicking and biting ceased, and as the horses were harnessed one by one, though a little restless, they neighed contentedly, and rubbed their heads amicably against Andrew's shoulder; following him at last quite peaceably out of the stable. Once outside, it is true, the scene threatened to recommence, owing to the presence of the enemy; and at the best it is no easy task for one man unassisted to put four horses to. However, Andrew succeeded, and after seeking one of the chains, which had been mislaid—whether intentionally or not—he emptied the sack of oats into the farmer's bin, gave a piece of

money to one of the servants, and thanking the farmer for his entertainment, leapt into the saddle.

"Good-bye; thank you for bringing the planks," was the reply, as with a vigorous bound the horses prepared to make a rapid start; but Andrew's strong hand holding in the saddle-horse, they were not permitted to break into a trot, till a hundred paces from the door.

"Well, if any one knows how to ride and drive, it's he," exclaimed the youth that had received the money; and the farmer after surveying the now rapidly departing team for a few moments, with his hands in his pockets, aroused his wife to the fact that it was quite time she began to bestir herself, as half a day had been lost already.

Andrew had to put quite a novel restraint upon himself to prevent his venting some of his indignant feelings upon his horses. Happily he encountered nothing and no one on the road, and after a tumult of outraged emotions his fever somewhat abated, giving place to a fresh study of the whole question,—Had he done simply what was right? When he thought of the father, his right arm involuntarily raised the whip once more, and woe to the horse that had stumbled or otherwise transgressed at that juncture. But very speedily his recollections reverted to the girl herself. And here they paused in positive dismay; till,

by-and-by, a feeling of pity and indulgence seized him, and he began to doubt whether, after all, if he had fully loved her he would not have made her his first object, and obeyed his mother's own exhortations as to not letting her stand in the way. Indeed, so many and various were his doubts and questionings, that who knows whether, but for the fact of the narrow road being bordered by hedges on each side, he might not have turned his horses' heads and driven back to Dorngrüt to retract! As it was, there was time for the parting view of Marian to impress him afresh with the keenest horror. He had never in his life seen a woman so enraged. Was it not merciful that this experience had occurred in time, or what a fearful discovery might have followed when too late! He had often heard of madness, and surely this could not be very different; for it had so completely disfigured and altered Marian that he would hardly have recognised her. Indeed, if this were her real self, for nothing in the whole world would he have her for his wife. He even blushed as it was to think of his choice, so vivid was his recollection of her aspect at parting; in fact he was completely upset by the final scene at Dorngrüt, and almost began to congratulate himself on its occurrence just in time. The last remembrance, the last word, the last look,—what an influence they sometimes have upon the future! In the matter of rage (or let

us call it temper, not to be too emphatic), there may be occasionally certain noble indignations which will be actually becoming; but for the most part, the result is entirely the other way, disfiguring a young girl's countenance horribly. It may pass off without leaving any perceptible sign; but, like a limb once broken, it will almost certainly retain some trace of its effects; at least if of frequent recurrence.

But at the thought of poor Marian's natural loathing of her present home, and her craving to be received into Andrew's, his heart was again filled with tender pity. He even felicitated himself on not having resented the old man's brutality. One thing, however, seemed to him certain—his suit was absolutely at an end. A great gulf seemed now to separate him from Dorngrüt: days but a little in the past seemed to him now as though they had belonged to the realm of dreams, and had no bearing whatever on his own future life. This was a sore sensation; for who could see anything so dear to him engulfed? who could see so fair a sun set behind thick black clouds without a pang? True, we may see the most cherished object of either our hope or our possession buried, and not wish to go to the grave with it; deterred by the conviction that nothing occurs by chance, and also by the confidence that this death is not of our own causing.

The more Andrew grew calm, the more he realized his loss; and the more confident he felt that he had acted rightly; yes, and spoken rightly, which is sometimes even more difficult.

It was late when he arrived at home, where all were patiently waiting, satisfied that the delay was a good omen.

"I think I'll go to bed; I've a conviction that he'll not come back to-night," Annette had just said. "What will you wager, Felix?"

"What have you got to pay with?" he asked. "For my part, I feel as certain that he'll come home to-night, as that hay's not straw. Certainly I shouldn't have thought it likely he'd be pressed to stay. I've been there once, and I know I wasn't. There's no great likelihood of Andrew being kept, with his four horses, when I took my one and I wasn't even asked to put up."

A sound of wheels was now heard.

"Here he is!" shouted one.

"No! it's not Andrew, or we should hear him cracking his whip."

His appearance at this moment settled the question.

"It's all off!" exclaimed his mother; for the rest, there was little said. A sombre feeling spread itself over the little circle; and yet it seemed drawn only the more closely and affectionately together. Who has not felt the void in a house

when the corpse of some loved one has been carried out from it, and felt as though life henceforth were out of joint; conscious at the same time of an increased tenderness for those who remain, as though in the hope of compensating to each of them for their loss? The sun never shines so brightly as after a storm; and it is one of the glories of love, that it is the balm for its own wounds.

There was a softened tone in every voice as it addressed Andrew; every one had listened with wrapt attention to his recital. There was a general feeling of indignation against Marian; especially felt by Annette, who asserted that she would have felt it impossible to treat anyone in such a way for whom she felt a grain of regard. The parents were hurt at the incivility of Marian's father, towards a family, too, that had certainly nothing to be ashamed of. As to Marian, they were not surprised. Anna even remarked that she had had a secret misgiving as to her disposition, but that she had meant to avoid ever giving her offence. But no one found fault with Andrew, or suggested anything in which he could perhaps have done better—as is so very easy when once the game is played; and what can be more irritating to the loser? No one regretted so much as Anna that the advent of the daughter-in-law was thus indefinitely postponed. She had hoped she was about

to see her successor at the head of the establishment, and it was out of the question to think of Andrew's trying elsewhere. Under any circumstances, Anna would hardly have been likely to urge a thing upon another of which the want is not felt, as a selfish unintelligent affection will sometimes prompt.

On this account Andrew liked to be much with his mother. She was always fond of old family memories, with which she would regale him, travelling far back into the past. Those who have not too laborious a present naturally indulge in these retrospections, and from the past naturally turn to contemplate the future,—their own and that of their children: such it seems probable is the simple philosophy of genuine family feeling,—call it family pride, if you will. Dearly as Andrew loved his mother, there was, however, one thing on which he did not touch, and that was his happy days in the past with Marian. He had firmly resolved to make no attempt whatever at any reconciliation. He knew that in attempts like these there is very often only greater loss than that first incurred. Moreover, he kept the more resolute silence, because, knowing how his mother felt with, as well as for him, he was aware that the merest supposition of his relenting would be sufficient for her to count her very life as nothing, might she but thereby succeed in cementing the broken tie. He

avoided every allusion to the subject; but being so utterly and entirely for him a thing of the past, it was lit up in his memory and imagination with that glow, that "supreme poetry of the things which are no more," which made the picture of Marian he carried in his heart more and more lovely, and the remembrance of their mutual attachment only more and more rapturous. This was why he preferred to be much alone, and often got up at night to sit at his open window and converse with memory the more freely.

He yearned to know what was passing in the heart of the girl who so occupied his own. He would have given anything to be enlightened on this point. He looked, in spite of himself, at the picture of the very different life he might have been about to enter on,—a life endowed with all the elements of satisfaction, peace, and completeness; and then, sadly setting this fair scene aside, he would reflect how at least there was death which might re-unite them, triumphing over separation and all the crossness of men and things. Next, he would very inconsequently picture himself setting out for Dorngrüt under cover of evening, either to peer about for some distant glimpse or sound of Marian, or to inquire at the inn how it was with her. And yet all these soothing schemes faded in quick succession; not because he did not know which to adopt, but because he had absolutely decided to do

nothing, and was convinced that things would remain as they were. He had more than once been on the point of thinking aloud to his mother, but the thought of the intense interest she would feel effectually closed his lips.

It will be believed that this state of affairs was excessively distasteful to Annette, who sighed for something a little more active and exciting.

The resemblance between young men and wasps is astonishing. If there's a ripe pear on a tree, you will see, not one, but a troop of these insects intent upon devouring it—and the young men, be they ever so much attracted by a damsel, prefer assailing her in the society of others. It seems as though competition added to the interest.

So it was in this instance. Annette had had many admirers, even lawyers had been numbered amongst them, for the prize was tempting,—lawyers skilfully displaying their red cloaks, and pulling their moustaches with an air of infinite wisdom and penetration. But these little arts availed nothing. However, a certain youth who had been Annette's playfellow throughout her childhood, now suddenly joined the party of aspirants, and most unmercifully did she resist this presumption.

One day, when Christian happened to be alone, the young man presented himself, and sitting down at his side, without much preamble, formally asked

his permission to obtain his daughter's hand. Christian, literally staring with surprise, replied:

"But, my dear Hans, you astonish me! you're about the last person I should have expected on this errand. For my part, I've no objection whatever; but, of course, before giving you a positive answer I must talk it over with my family, and we must know what Annette herself thinks. I don't feel at all sure about that."

"On the contrary, I think she and I are pretty well agreed about it."

"How! has anything been said already?"

"That there has. She's given me her word, as far as she can before consulting you, and I don't think she was joking this time."

"No, of course not; joking would be very unsuitable in such a case. Still, I confess I'm very much surprised. If you hadn't told it me yourself I couldn't have believed it."

"No! nor I either; but now no one will convince me to the contrary. You see I've always liked her; but I should never have dared to set my heart upon her, because she has always seemed only to make fun of me, and to contradict me: besides, I felt quite sure that whoever wanted her would have no easy task. However, a little while ago I was standing one day outside the inn at Herlingen, where, as it happened, without my knowing it, a little party of neighbours had met,

and the younger ones were going to have a dance or two before they left. I was sauntering about, quite undecided whether to go in and rest a little, when someone tapped me on the shoulder, with 'I say, Hans, what are you standing there for? If you'd like for once to dance three times with me, you may; and I'm going to have some bread and cheese and a glass of wine with it afterwards before I go home: so you may join me, and see me part of the way.'

"I was as surprised as you seemed to be just now, and I stood for a moment stock-still with astonishment; then she went on: 'Listen, Hans; there are two people in there that I object to; one's a lawyer's son, I believe, and the other's the parish doctor: now I look to you to relieve me of them. I wouldn't for the world that anyone should see me either dancing or sitting down to table with either of them. The fact is, I'm afraid of both of them, and I've confidence in you. Now you'll manage it, won't you?'

"When it got to this I hardly knew whether I stood on my head or my heels. So at least she had said she felt confidence in me; and altogether her manner towards me was quite altered: still it wasn't without difficulty that she consented to my coming to ask you.

"'Well!' she said at last, 'you may do as you please; only I won't be present.'"

"How like Annette!" ejaculated Christian. "She's not amiss; far from it. If she's said even so much as this, ten to one she'll make a good wife after all. But she always gives one the idea of her head being full of whims and caprices. I dare say it'll go off, if you're not afraid to run the risk. But remember, she's not easy to manage!"

"Ah! I know that already," replied Hans; and just at this moment, thinking he heard a noise inside the grange, by which they were sitting, Christian got up rather more briskly than usual to open the door, expecting to find one of the servants there (servants have been known to listen to these discussions!); and fancying he saw signs of life under a heap of flax behind the door, he touched it with his stick, when who should spring up but Annette herself, armed with her sauciest look, and not in the least abashed.

"I thought I should just like to hear how he'd get it out," she remarked, "and to know what you'd say about me. I felt pretty sure you'd say a good deal that I should never hear in any other way, and you see I was right. But you'd no business, Hans, to repeat all that I said to you that day. I'm not at all sure now that I shall accept you; I've promised nothing. It'll all depend upon what my father thinks."

Poor Hans looked anxious.

"You know, Annette, what I've said to Hans.

There must be no joking about things like these; but Holy Week's near, and then there'll be no banns published for some time: besides, we must think of Andrew. It would be painful to him if there were to be a wedding in the family just now. I'll talk it over with your mother at once. She'll be very glad to hear it; for she's always felt that a thoughtless young girl was a thing to be very anxious about. No one so likely to steady her as a good husband."

"Really, father, if I've been such an anxiety to you, I think the sooner I'm off your hands the better. But I assure you I've always meant to behave so as not to cause you any real trouble."

"I don't complain of you, Annette; but 'the flesh is weak,' even with the best resolutions; and when it does well, this is by God's grace, not of itself,—remember that."

It was Holy Week, according to the Federal Calendar, and this terminates in a solemn fast late in the autumn. The return of this season was always a very marked occasion at Liebwyl. The whole family were accustomed to go to church together, and the sermon was always devoutly listened to and thoughtfully quoted and discussed long after.

Christian and Anna had had much talk over the events of the past year, especially with reference to

Andrew; wondering how God would order his life. The night before Fast-day they had talked together till very late, so much so that they had had great difficulty in going to sleep; and Anna overslept herself in the morning. She was extremely vexed with herself, for of all things she disliked hurry on a day when outward calm was so needful for inward recollection, and for attentive listening to the word of God. To her surprise, on going down stairs she found the work done; and seeing Annette at the fireplace, asked her who had awakened her.

"Good morning, mother," was the reply. "Who awoke me? Why, myself, of course," and a pretty colour suffused her face; "did you think it impossible that I could take a little thought and trouble just for once?"

"Well, yes; but what put this into your head? tell me."

"Really, mother, you speak as though I were never to do or say anything but nonsense all my life; but I assure you I'm not always quite what I appear. I know I've plenty of faults though; but now I intend to try and conquer them, and become, not like you, mother (who could?), but just a little that way. I know I'm a long way off it; but I decided yesterday that now's the time to begin; especially because we don't know how long we may have to try."

"Very true, Annette," answered her mother; "I always think young women should especially remember this. I have so often noticed how they've been suddenly cut off sometimes just as they were on the point of becoming so thoroughly happy. But how thankful I am that you're beginning really to take yourself in hand! I couldn't have expected it of you. Oh! don't go back; and then I feel as though I should depart in peace, if only I knew how it would be with poor Andrew. If I only knew that he was to be made happy, I should have nothing left to wish to live for."

"But why speak of dying, mother, just when we all need you most?"

"My child, when the trees are fully grown the woodman takes away the props; they would only be an encumbrance to them: and God does likewise. But now, if breakfast isn't quite ready yet, I'll go and dress in the mean time: I never like to have to hurry to church."

It was a pure, calm autumn day, and the air was eloquent with bells. One might almost have individualised them: the sounds from one quarter seemed to resemble a father's manly tones, and from another quarter, sweeter but not less serious notes would seem to resemble those of a mother.

On ordinary occasions young people get along fastest on the road; but this time it was the good old mothers who might be seen in the front ranks,

mostly with a husband at their side, listening to talk of the days gone by. The whole race of men, indeed, are but one great caravan on the road to the grave, hurrying to lay down the mantle of flesh at the great gate behind which lies the land of life. There was a fitness therefore in this precedence of the aged; and more than one among them would no doubt reflect, on reaching the churchyard, that one of its next dwellings might be prepared for them.

Anna was among the foremost. Many an old woman had been delighted to walk part of the way with her, and to each she chatted so affably that the listener walked as erect as she had done ten years ago—sympathy has such an enlivening effect upon the poor human heart, like sunshine in a sick man's chamber; and only see the effect produced there by a visit from any one good or great, with a smile of friendly sympathy and a shake of the hand: it does as much good as medicine.

On arriving at church, several of the assembled congregation beckoned to Anna, recommending such or such a seat as being the best suited for hearing the sermon; and at last one was chosen from which a little rest could be obtained against a neighbouring pillar if the discourse should happen to be long. The church filled, the bells rang, and the schoolmaster entered the pulpit and read the

lesson for the day, so as to drown the peals. At last both bells and reading ceased, and the pastor entered, looking pale and absorbed. After praying he gave out the hymn, which was sung unanimously. He then gave out the text, taken from the Book of Joshua.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

No doubt these are thrilling words; but it seemed odd that a congregation, calling themselves Christians, should be called upon to decide whether they would serve the Lord: one would have thought that had been decided long ago.

The pastor began by remarking, that a nation in a state of decadence has invariably been known to observe, less and less, the divine command—"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee;" and he then went on to call the attention of the congregation to the signification of the word "house," considering it to mean all the members of a family, as well as the house they inherit; just as the word "church" will be found sometimes to represent the temple, and the worshippers within it.

Now the house, or home, was itself the first temple in which the Lord was worshipped, and the father of the family was the first priest. When

the family had become a people, a building was erected available for all to worship in as one family, and serving to remind them that they were but one. Still, between times, the separate sanctuary of each family house was equally frequented, the father of the family officiating as the priest.

Any other altar, any other temple was a sign of idolatry,—a sign of worship which was not that of Jehovah, and of the desertion of the family sanctuary.

Just so, in the latter dispensation, should every father be both king and priest in his own house, ruling according to the law of love, and offering incense of family affection and virtue upon the altar of the Lord. The church in which we meet will still be the general temple, in which, whether we come to it from the cottage or the palace, we still present ourselves as members of one great family before our Maker. As to our relative positions in it, that will appear to the eyes of angelic witnesses, according to the fidelity with which we perform our part in our own homes, and upon the account we are preparing to render. Every home then is, or ought to be, a temple of the living God; and in every home, where parents know how to make themselves respected as God's representatives, the blessing and protection of Heaven will not be wanting.

"But let us think," my hearers, he continued, "of the solemn day that is so steadily approaching, and of how you who are fathers and mothers will be able to meet it.

"If each of you were now to speak out, how many complaints we should probably hear! The husband about his wife, the wife about the husband; both husband and wife of their children, and all of their servants. You would probably go on to blame the poor around you, the schoolmaster, the village authorities: yes, you would complain of everyone, forgetting that every one of these defects emanates originally from the spirit of your own homes, and your homes are the mirrors of your own souls. This is why they are insupportable to some of you fathers, instead of being the happiest spot upon earth. If your children are undutiful, if your servants are unwilling and disorderly, you must look to yourselves for the cause of this; and still more you must remember, that not only are our homes what we by our personal character make them, but that our nation will be great, or weak and tottering, according to the spirit and tenor of our homes."

All this was expressed by the pastor in the simplest and most forcible language. Anna experienced strange sensations as she listened,—a sort of wrapt excitement, made up of both joy and sorrow. Her home presented itself before her,

radiant with the sunshine of dignity and peace, a home which she might well think of with pride and satisfaction. There was a sort of ecstasy in her conviction of the perfect harmony that reigned there. "Now," she would have exclaimed, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" but one painful pre-occupation returned, and threw a shade over her spirit. She thought of Andrew, who, though he did not complain, never smiled: he worked hard, but he liked to be alone, and at times looked dreary, which never escaped his mother's eye. Anna felt as though if she were taken, Andrew would be left alone in the world: she was not satisfied, inasmuch as she had not seen who was to take her place as priestess at the altar of the family hearth. But the star of hope shone through the cloud. "God, who has never failed us yet in any trouble, will surely help us out of this," she reflected; adding, "not my will be done, oh, Lord, but Thine."

In the afternoon Anna decided to stay at home and take care of the house; but she advised the others to go again to church, remarking, that if there should be another sermon like the morning's, it would be a thousand pities for anyone to miss it.

"But I must get one of you," she added, "to bring me back some rice, at least six pounds. I hear there's dysentery in the village: Christine Klaus is ill with it, and her four children. Think

of them all ill together, so that they can't wait upon each other, and with absolutely nothing in the house most probably. I can't tell you what I feel for them. As soon as you've all come back I shall go and see what can be done for them; they must certainly be looked after. They've actually no one they can even send for the doctor."

"Think, mother, you'd much better send one of the servants," remarked Felix, "or wait till to-morrow morning. It's a long way off, and you've had a good long walk already."

"No, no; I don't like to trust to servants; they wouldn't know what to do: very likely the poor woman herself even wouldn't know, or perhaps she mightn't like to ask; and you know how painful it is to have to direct and explain when one's ill. These things should be divined. Besides, the most willing servant is sometimes wanting in experience; hardly anyone can nurse who doesn't know what it is to be ill."

"Very well, then; but you'll wait till to-morrow."

"Really, Felix, what would you say if, when you were ill, I should tell you to wait till to-morrow?"

"Ah! but that's different. I'm your own child."

"Very different, no doubt. You are one, while down yonder there are four, nay, five, all unable to

do anything but suffer and moan. Think how they would be likely to get through the night!"

"But perhaps you may not be able to do them much good after all."

"Perhaps not; but at any rate I'll try. It'll cheer them even to see that they're not quite left to themselves. Just imagine now, if one of them should die to-night, and no one at hand to separate the dead from the living! Think of that!"

"But, mother, you really don't intend to go and stay all night?"

"How do I know? That must depend upon how I find them; but if I shouldn't be back by the usual time, you'll know where I am. And if there's anyone there that I can send, you'll be sure to give him all that I want."

"It's no use, mother; you really must not go. They say dysentery's infectious. Send one of the servants."

"Oh! Christian, have you no heart? Do you think such service as that could be acceptable? Besides, do you think it would be right to send into the way of danger a poor servant whose only fortune is her health; and that too for us to get all the praise, and she perhaps not so much as 'thank you?' No, no, Christian; that's not been our way yet, and never shall be."

Among the country poor perhaps hardly any other complaint inspires so much dread and

disgust as dysentery. Imagine, then, such a sick household, with only one actual bed, the rest making shift with any scraps of bedding or even rags, on the table, on the stove, sometimes on a stray plank! No one possessing more than two shirts, one on and the other drying on the hedge: where the cupboard is innocent of provisions of any description; where firewood has to be collected for each day in the neighbouring wood; where anyone who remarks that 'it's twelve o'clock and no dinner,' is told that when people are hungry they should not notice what time it is! Think of the misery of a sick family without linen or any of the necessaries of sickness!"

Later in the day, on the return of the family from afternoon service, Anna prepared to start. No one offered any opposition; only everyone begged to accompany her, and when she refused, implored her not to stay long.

Much as Anna had seen of these sorrows, she was by no means prepared for what she now encountered. She had brought the rice and a little linen, some bread, and a bottle of cream, which she knew to be very soothing; but when she found there was neither wood, linen, nor any appliances for cleanliness in the house, her heart misgave her. There were some people there, thanks to its being Sunday, and they had brought bread and salted meat; others had put down some

pence upon the table with a sigh, and exclaiming, "what destitution!" Others had shaken hands, saying they were obliged to go, as there was no one at home to see after the cooking; but this without inquiring who was to take their place in the sick room. They came and went, discussing and deciding that most likely not one of the sick family would get over it; but till Anna came, no one had taken up the case seriously. She set to work immediately. For a thorough housewife like her there could be no rest in the midst of such disorder. She requested the last person who left to let the doctor know that he was wanted, and to leave word at Liebwyl as to the things that were to be sent down. In a marvellously short time, wood and butter were in the house, and the rice-water on the fire. The room had been aired and tidied, and all with so little fuss or noise, that the poor sick woman looked more hopeful already. Truly, the instinct of order is worth something.

In the evening Annette arrived, carrying several huge parcels, and telling her mother that she had come to take her place. This idea was not at all approved of by Anna: a woman like her, when once she has put her hand to the wheel, cannot possibly take it off; the very idea would upset her. Besides, only those who have seen children suffer acutely can imagine what it is to see agony and death written in their faces. It sometimes

happens, among the children of the very poor, that there is a sort of instinct of their being a burden to their parents. As mere infants, they may have been fondled by their mother; their father even may have carried them about; but growing out of this, they have ceased to get much attention: no one has time for it. When they are ill they lie passive and untended: they have begun the rude apprenticeship of life, and they evince a touching resignation; they neither moan nor weep; their lips may be parched with fever, and they may see the cooling drink in a broken cup, near at hand; but they may look at it long and wistfully, before their mother has time to ask, "Would you like a drink?" as she hurriedly passes by.

When we see the helplessness of the children of the rich,—how incapable they often are of bearing pain, how they will cry only to see a finger bleed, we feel to pity them equally. Who will say which are most to be pitied in view of the life before them? Oh! that parents would systematically harden the heart of their children against the ills of life, but strive to keep it soft and impressible to affection!

The little ones here lay silent, resigned—callous, anyone would have said, who did not understand the case. What were they thinking about? Did they think of their sufferings, and of the death that had been so openly talked of in their hearing?

They made no sign. Only when Anna had washed them and changed their clothes, speaking pleasantly to them, and giving them something warm to drink, they really seemed to come to life; they seemed even disposed to speak; and the youngest, a little fair-haired girl, inquired:

"Who are you? Are you my grandmother? You won't go, will you, not till mother's well again?"

"No, little one; I won't leave you," replied Anna; for in very deed she could not go. These children, and especially the little one, had won her heart: she felt like their grandmother; and as though, if she were to desert them, God would require it at her hands. She did not say so to Annette; in fact, she had not actually said so to herself. "I couldn't trust anyone to make the rice-water," she explained. "I've seen it nothing but pure water, with all the rice at the bottom; whereas the doctors say it should be almost like liquid glue to do good. And then there's the children's medicine: their mother declares they won't touch it; but I must try. I know if they'll take it from anyone, they will from me; they know me now. It's easier now to stay than to go; but to-morrow you may send the cart and horse, and if any one likes to take my place they may; now that things are mending the neighbours won't be so afraid to come. Don't forget to bring

me some barley, and one of the eider-downs from the loft."

It was in vain that Annette argued: she was obliged to return home; and though even the poor sick mother herself protested, Anna stood her ground.

"Oh! but how can I ever thank you for all this?" she went on. "There are times when women expect to have to nurse each other, and I've been very glad to help them; but in a case like this we are expected to do for ourselves. Just put the broth on the fire, and I think I can do."

When she saw that Anna was not to be overruled, she burst into tears, exclaiming that she had not believed there was such kindness in the world. "You can't think," she added, "what it is to me, to be warm in bed without having to get up."

At last the medicine came, and with it a message from the doctor to the effect that he would be there to-morrow. In the mean time the medicine was to be taken, and as much rice-water as possible.

"And now try and go to sleep," was Anna's advice, "while I go and give the children their medicine." Thereupon, after caressing the little one, and promising her some nice broth by-and-by, Anna got her to take a spoonful, which the child remarked was very nice.

"Have you never taken medicine before?" inquired Anna.

"No; but mother's often said if we were naughty she'd send us to bed, and give us some nasty stuff to drink."

The other children followed the example of the youngest, especially as they liked anything that brought Anna to their bedside.

Night had come, and the poor mother slept. Anna, who had been constantly occupied with the children and the rice-water, looked for the lamp, but, alas! there was no oil. She asked the children if they knew where it was, but they had not seen any for two days.

Happily it was full moon, but this was not quite the lamp for a sick room.

"Dear me," thought Anna to herself, almost incredulous, as at last she found time to sit down, "four sick children and no lamp! Ah! we don't know what poverty is! We are far too rich. What should I feel if anything were wanting in my house one single night? I shouldn't have a wink of sleep, although I knew I had only to wait till the morning to send for as much as I please. And here, absolutely nothing whatever, and no money! No bread! and all sick people. Oh! it's times like this that make us feel how much better it is to give than to receive. Then too, if ever I were to see my children lying that way, on miserable rags, and almost skin and bone! Gracious God, how should I bear it? Or if God

were to call upon me to choose between losing my property and losing my children! Oh! gracious and pitiful God, I thank Thee, it has never come to this; for if my children were spared to me, and I had neither food nor clothing for them, and couldn't bring my mind to beg, what would become of me? And yet I couldn't part with them! What would all my wealth be to me without my children? I should only weep like Rachel, and refuse to be comforted.

"What a lovely child!" she exclaimed to herself as she took up the youngest, its face and its silky hair lit up by the moonlight. "What will you be like a few years hence? Oh! what would some women give for such a child? What a different bed you might be lying on, and what care you might receive! But you've come here by God's will, and He knows what He's about, while we know nothing. Yes, how much there is that we can't understand; for instance, why this poor woman should have so little while we could do so well with less than we have. We mightn't live and sleep so luxuriously, but we should have oil for our lamp. But God is over all. The great thing is, that both rich and poor should be dutiful to each other. Oh! I would gladly do all I can. And Christian! if he could but see such a scene as this, I'm sure he'd forgive me many things; he'd understand then what I've felt when they've come to

beg. I must give, God helping me; we don't know perhaps to the full the real want these poor people suffer. I shall never forget what I've seen here. Christian needn't see it, certainly; he has a kind heart: but there are others who ought: people who are innately wicked; who suck the blood of the poor when they can without compunction. God forgive me! And how many there are always complaining and discontented, without knowing what real want is, without realizing what it is to be well off! Oh! how their murmurings must sound in heaven! Yes, whenever we lie down in our warm bed, and think of our children in theirs, and of their having everything they can require, how humble and grateful we should feel!"

Such were Anna's reflections; and for nothing in the world would she have missed that night in the sick woman's dwelling. Those who live day after day without stirring out of their groove, do not really know what life is. Their thoughts get narrowed, and absorbed in their own little personal concerns; they fail to imagine anything that goes on elsewhere, or to believe that it is different. "And, when we think of it, why should not this misery have fallen upon us? Let want have taken but two or three steps further, and it might have come in at our door. How should we have met it?" So thought Anna. And if so many people are hard and indifferent, is it not partly because they

do not reflect, that however secure may be their position it may possibly change?

To Anna the night passed quickly. It had been to her a real night of blessing; quite as much so as to her charges, who had slept soundly, and were sleeping when the morning star shone in at the little window. The morning brought other people to the house, and amongst them Christian himself, looking rather stern, but bringing all that had been asked for. Anna, to whom this look was familiar, got him to fasten his horse outside, and to come into the room to see what was there: yet his features hardly relaxed. It did not appear to him a state of things to have required his wife to stay there all night; and he did not realize the difference that this had made.

"Now then, come along," he said to her impatiently.

"Oh! are you going?" inquired the little one anxiously. "No, no; you said you'd stay;" and she threw her arms round Anna's neck, and refused to listen to any of her consolations. The other children, though they said little, clearly showed what they felt at the idea of the "good lady" leaving them. As to their mother, she began to weep afresh, and could only pray God to reward Anna for all she had done, declaring that there was not such another woman in the world; and that she could never forget that night, for it had

seemed as though an angel from heaven had come down to visit them.

After this Christian's countenance brightened; his heart was touched at the proof of what Anna had been to the poor sufferers. He felt pitiful; and assured the poor invalid that, though his wife must go, they should not be forgotten; but that she was not young, and could not bear much fatigue. "God bless you; don't be anxious: as soon as you're well again you must come and see us, and we'll see what can be done."

This was a great deal for Christian, who generally left everything of this kind to his wife; and he was profoundly touched by what she further related on their way home.

It was a cold autumn morning on which Christian and Anna returned, their faces flushed with a sharp north wind. Anna shivered as she got down from the cart. She had been warm when she set out, and had not put on any extra clothing. No one had thought of it, seeing that the distance was so short. She had eaten nothing since the evening before, for fear of robbing the poor children. "It's astonishing how cold it makes one to be hungry!" she remarked; "I shouldn't have believed it: but Annette will be sure to have some hot coffee ready for me: I confess I never felt so ready for it as this morning."

The coffee was duly prepared, and, from time to time, as she drank it, Anna kept repeating:

"Oh! children, we don't know how happy and fortunate we are, nor how much the poor are to be pitied. We have warm food, warm beds, and when anything is wanted, whatever it may be, we've only to send to the granary or to the cellar for it. No! we don't know how rich we are!"

The children entreated her to go to bed for a short time, but she only yielded after much pressing; she was so full of all she had seen, she could have talked about it all the morning.

"Now then, mother, go to sleep," repeated Annette for the sixth time before her mother would let her go.

"But just think of this, and then imagine," repeated Anna, each time feeling less and less disposed for silence and sleep. At last sleep came, but it was disturbed and broken, so much so that Annette more than once crept in from the next room to see what her mother wanted. She presently heard her talking again, and again looking in saw that she was asleep.

"Here, Andrew," she said to her brother, "just come and see how mother's talking in her sleep. Should I wake her?"

"Oh, no! by no means," replied Andrew; "let her sleep. What she's seen of these poor people has gone to her heart so that she can't throw it

off. I think it's only that: but don't go in again; only listen outside."

Anna got up with a headache, but she said nothing about it. She was afraid of being reminded that they had told her how it would be. So she kept this and other pains to herself. But the colic presently increasing, she made some herb tea, which however she could only drink occasionally without its being seen.

"Mother, you're not well, what is it?" was soon the inquiry.

"Oh! nothing much, I've made some tea, and I dare say it'll soon go off."

"I shall send some one for the doctor," decided Christian; "there's no knowing what this might turn to."

"Nonsense; what would he think! Annette shall make me some rice-water, and if it doesn't go off, we'll see."

"Bah! bah! hundreds and hundreds of persons have died of your 'we'll see.'"

"Well, at any rate wait till to-morrow. By-the-by, let someone go to the oil factory to tell them to make us our linseed oil quickly: it's getting low; and I know now what it is to be without oil in the house."

The next morning Anna was no better: on the contrary, she was weak, and the complaint had increased. A message was sent, asking the doctor

to come at once; and word came back in reply, that Anna must be careful, for dysentery was raging in the village; and that he would call that day as he passed.

This was a great shock, for no one had imagined for a moment that this was the mother's complaint, and they all looked more or less unnerved. Christian, though he had warned Anna against infection, rejected that idea for himself altogether now.

"Oh! if she should die! if she should die!" was on everyone's lips. Even a little shepherd girl was found sobbing bitterly at the back of the house. "If she dies," she exclaimed, "I shall have no one left! She promised me a new frock on new year's day if I was good, and I'm sure she wouldn't have forgotten it."

Christian was terribly dejected and bewildered. When he wanted to go out, he sometimes could not find the handle of the door. No one exactly knew why they should be so much afraid; there was no appearance of danger yet: the doctor had only meant to urge caution. But the mother had never been known to be ill or laid up before—she had always been the one to watch over everyone else, so that it seemed impossible they could ever be called upon to lose her. Tears ran down the face of Annette, who had to give her mother the medicine; and her hands trembled so that she

could not hold the spoon: Andrew was obliged to help her. Anna was calm, and tried to console them. They were not sure that the complaint would be dangerous, or that she would die of it; and after all, we must die once—a little sooner or a little later, what does that matter? God had spared them to each other a long time. If this had happened twenty years ago, it would have been different; but now—now they could do without her.

In the afternoon the doctor came, but the disorder had taken a turn before his arrival. "It's just as I expected," he remarked. Still he implored them to be calm, so as not to agitate the invalid. "We must hope," he said, "that it may be God's will to spare so good a woman yet a little longer; it would be a terrible loss to the poor."

As the doctor left, they all followed him to a long distance from the house, asking his opinion again and again, and imploring him to do his utmost. At last they went in. One after another would sit down, resting their heads on their hands, so that their eyes might not be seen; and would then steal into the sick-room to see their mother. Each wanted to stay and wait upon her. The next morning, even the milkman got up earlier than usual, that he might know how she had passed the night: for whenever any of the servants had been ill, Anna had never hesitated

to sit up with them and nurse them, constantly attending at their bedside, medicine in hand, without being sent for; and however repugnant the remedy may have been, it was always accepted with confidence, and with a feeling of pleasure at the thought of not being forgotten in spite of being only a servant.

The doctor considered that for an elderly person the attack was serious; and he paid the case the closest attention. He was there the first thing in the morning, and usually re-appeared the last thing at night. Husband and children never thought of taking off their clothes: if one of them dozed, anxiety soon banished sleep, and the next thing was to go to the sick-room to see what was passing, or to waylay anyone who came out of it to make inquiries; for the doctor had requested that there might be as few in the room as possible. This prescription, however, was the most difficult to follow. At the first report of Anna's illness, all the neighbours had hurried to see her, and the room would have been crowded had they been allowed to enter.

"Dear, dear," one would have exclaimed, "she looks as though she'd hardly live till to-morrow. How she must have suffered! but I've seen others worse who've pulled through." Fear would have driven others away forthwith; or if some poor women had wished to have a word with her, it

would most probably have been to say farewell, hoping they would meet in heaven.

It was not easy to appease the crowd. Everyone thought they had a perfect right to enter the sick-room, for this is so usual in some classes of society that a prohibition would sound quite mysterious. According to them a sick-room should be as free of access as the general council chamber. The visitors were dismissed with the utmost politeness, the doctor following it up, but this satisfied but few of the visitors. Some imagined Anna was already dead, and were indignant at not being allowed to see her: others considered it "just like their pride;" others again surmised that Anna might have revelations to make which she would not like everyone to hear; or possibly bequests (she had always been so generous), and her children did not approve of this. Such was some of the gossip, which probably even the speakers did not believe in; for the heart is often better than the tongue.

As for Anna, what made them all hopeful was, that she did not herself speak of dying. They argued that this must be a good sign; and in fact one morning a favourable crisis seemed to have passed. Anna insisted that they should all go out to their work, except Andrew, who might stay and sit with her. He had sat up with her all night, and he might possibly doze a little. If anything should

happen they would not be far off. The weather was splendid, and there was much to be done out of doors; so that at last they yielded: but not one of them failed to have some pretext for returning to the house again and again, and just took the opportunity for seeing how the mother was, or if anything was wanted.

"Are they all out?" asked Anna at last.

"I think so, mother; I don't see anyone about."

"Then come and sit by me. I've something to say to you, Andrew, and my time may be short."

"Oh! no, mother, I hope not. You're really better. Try and get a little sleep."

"This is not a time to sleep. I feel I shall soon be at rest. Listen; give me your hand, and don't interrupt me. It's God who takes some and leaves others: but it's just this that troubles me; it's the only care I have, but it's a heavy one. I don't see her who ought to take my place, and whom I should have wished to commend to my husband and children. It's this that distresses me. I haven't liked to ask you what you feel, I've seen that your heart's been very full, and that you've wished to be alone; but now I must know what you think. Do you still love Marian, or do you feel you can think of someone else? You know there must be someone at the head of the house. Annette will go with her husband. For me, I'm going to my God. Someone must take my place."

"No! mother, I shall never think of anyone else. How could I?"

"Then you love her still?"

"Mother, perhaps it's wrong, but I can't forget her; whatever I think of, she is always before me."

"My child, I'm glad to hear it. She'll be yours yet, when you have to do without me."

"No! not that, or it would be almost as though I were waiting for you to die. Besides, I can't even yet forget how she looked the last time we met, and how she wouldn't say a parting word, though I implored her again and again. I couldn't have treated her so,—no, nor the meanest friend. And do you think now that I could go to her when you are gone, and speak of you—to a girl who refused to speak one kind word to me? Why, mother, if she should treat me this way after she was my wife, I should be the most miserable of men."

"My child, don't talk so. Don't let a moment of ill-humour stand in the way of your happiness for life. Think it over calmly. Think what would become of us if God visited our sins upon us this way."

"No, mother; if she'd loved me, she couldn't have treated me so. Even the day she was here she had a scornful look that made me terribly anxious."

"I've thought of that. I saw that too; and at

first it pained me, for I feared she didn't like us or our home: but latterly, I've seen into her heart as I see through that window. I've read all that must have been passing in her mind, because I've looked back into my own. You know I've never talked to you much about my father; but oh! how I've prayed for him! He used to sit and drink in the public-houses; and many a time I've wished myself under ground. I said very little to anyone, but I remember that I used to have just the same manner as that young girl, raising my eyes as seldom as possible, so as not to see my father, nor whether others were watching him. I know that at those times I couldn't have said a kind word to anyone in the world, not to save my life; and yet my father was not so bad as Marian's, not so covetous, nor so harsh. It's this that has depressed the poor girl. She was astonished at much that she saw here, and she was really pleased with what she saw. I perfectly remember how she noticed one thing and another, as though it was all new to her. She would have wished nothing better than to come to us. But she couldn't speak a word for fear of bursting into tears. I've pitied her from the bottom of my heart; and I can quite picture her as she must have been at home that day when you and her father couldn't agree. It must have gone to her heart: it was just because it had all been so long pent up that there was

such a scene at last. It would have been very different with a different sort of girl."

"Very likely, mother; but still it wasn't right of her: what would become of me with a wife that could glare that way with her eyes, and not answer a word? What would people think?"

"Listen, Andrew; be indulgent for once, and don't cast off a poor girl who wouldn't have acted so strangely if she hadn't loved you. Honest-hearted girls are not always sugar and honey: it's those that are cunning that always keep a calm outside. Believe me, you'll never find a wife without some fault or other, and you may be very glad to have known her faults beforehand. Women are always more or less quick-tempered, choose as you will; but if you're only patient and gentle and affectionate, and show yourself to be a good man, your wife won't fail to devote herself to you. But you must seek God's help. You love me, Andrew, and you say you want a wife as much like me as possible; but you mustn't expect a young wife to have learnt all the lessons I have. Would it be reasonable? Now, believe me, if you'd known me when I was young, you wouldn't have chosen me; you'd have thought me too petulant and self-willed. But what are we spared to grow old for, except to improve? You wouldn't reject this poor girl without ever reflecting what she must have undergone, with her whole happiness depending upon

one word, which they wouldn't pronounce; and she not free to show or to express what she felt. Would you expect her to appear indifferent? An artful girl would have taken some very different course; probably she'd have tried again and again to coax you into surrendering to her father: but Marian only showed the mortification she felt; and you overwhelm her with reproaches. Oh! no! no! No more of that: promise me that you'll forgive her, and try to comfort her, remembering that she may have to forgive you. This is my last request. I only want this to die satisfied and happy. I've thought it well over. I know what an influence a new home may have. If I had married into another household, I dare say I should have turned out very differently. There are homes in which one seems to breathe a sort of atmosphere of goodness. I've felt this more and more; and I verily believe that I shall see it soon."

"Stop, mother; I can't bear it now, what can I do for you?"

"Promise me to be reconciled to Marian."

"But, mother, tell me how? How could I go after her again, when she dismissed me as she did, and has never shown the slightest signs of relenting?"

All at once Anna's face seemed illumined with a strange light. Andrew started.

"What is it, mother?" he exclaimed; "what's

the matter?" And he looked anxiously into her eyes, which were fixed upon the door. At a sign from her he turned round, and there in the doorway, her head leaning against the wall, he perceived Marian—his Marian—pale, thin, and weeping bitterly. Andrew started as though electrified, but without the power to move or to utter a single word. Marian held out her hand to him.

"Bring her to me," said Anna softly; and Andrew mechanically obeyed; whereupon she held a hand of each in her own.

"Now," she exclaimed, "I know that God loves me, for He granted me my last request. Now, keep together. Be faithful to each other; be sincere; open your whole hearts to each other always, so that there may never be any misunderstanding. Misunderstandings are terrible things; they grow and grow till sometimes they separate two hearts for ever. Think of all I have said to you; don't forget me; don't cease to love me; I think I shall see you still when you can't see me. Andrew, go quickly and call the others; I feel it's near the end. I'm beginning to grow cold. I want to see them all once again. Run quickly!"

When he had left, Anna said softly to Marian, "You love him, don't you? And you'll live for him?"

On this Marian fell on her knees at the bedside, and sobbed bitterly.

"Oh, mother, mother," she exclaimed, "if I could only become like you!"

"No! no!" answered Anna; "I am but a sinful woman, though our gracious God will accept me, I believe; and if you desire it, He will be your God too. You will learn to do better than I am, for yours has been the harder school. Love Andrew dearly, and be always true to him. I have loved him very dearly, perhaps too dearly; but then he's so good! There couldn't be a better son. You do love him; I know you do; and you'll try that all shall be arranged. Believe me, it'll end well. You can't imagine yet what a heart he has. Oh! what it costs me to leave him! But God will not reproach me, for he was His gift. Raise me a little; I want to sit up. I feel so strange! I'm so cold! And yet everything's so clear before my eyes. Is it the other world that's shining into them already? Oh! are they coming? I want to see them all together, just once more. But I've seen you! You'll be very tender and kind to Andrew, won't you, if ever he's ill? And you'll see that he doesn't overwork himself. (Put something warm round me; I'm cold to my very heart.) Whenever you're vexed, don't let him see or feel it; but just go away and say the Lord's Prayer to yourself.

"Oh! my God, my God! art Thou calling me to Thyself at last? I think I see my mother."

At this moment all the family hurried in, weeping irrepressibly. Marian started, and would have gone from her place,—a place she felt she had no right to. All at once she felt herself a stranger again, and ill at ease. But Anna still held her hand fast, and whispered softly, looking around her, "Our child. Love her. Now she will take my place. Don't grieve her: but think of me sometimes too, and love me still." (Turning to Christian); "I shall expect you there," she added, raising her eyes towards heaven, and then closing them, she clasped her hands, her pale lips moved to words of prayer. Once again her eyes opened, and this time they seemed to shine with a new light. As she prayed, her head drooped gently to one side; and a true woman, a loving wife and mother, had passed away from earth.

"Well done! good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE END.

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